

August 10, 1998
in India do
ss in public
DELHI (AFP) —
tourists visiting
have been told by the
nationalist-led gov-
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port said Sunday
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N (AFP) —
Princess William
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King sends message to Morocco's monarch

RABAT (Petra) — His Majesty King Hussein sent a private message to King Hassan II of Morocco delivered in Rabat Sunday evening by the King's advisor Salah Abu Zeid. The envoy discussed with King Hassan issues of common concern to Jordan and Morocco, while the Moroccan king expressed his wishes for the King's speedy recovery and safe return to the nation.

Jordan Times

An independent Arab political daily published by the Jordan Press Foundation
جوردان تايمز يومية سياسية مستقلة تصدر عن المؤسسة الصحفية الأردنية "الراي".

Government denounces U.S. embassies' bombings

AMMAN (J.T.) — The government on Monday denounced the bombings which targeted the U.S. embassies in Kenya and Tanzania. "We condemn all kinds of terrorist attacks and those who finance them. We consider these acts as cowardly and heinous," said Deputy Prime Minister Abdullah Ensour. "Such acts will not solve problems... this is a dangerous game which will bring harm to all parties," the minister said, adding that "the Jordanian government has no information on any involvement of Jordanians in these attacks." The minister was responding to a question on unconfirmed reports that Jordanians were linked to the bombings in Dar Es Salaam and Nairobi, where 150 persons killed and more than 4,824 persons were injured.

Volume 23 Number 6913

AMMAN TUESDAY, AUGUST 11, 1998, RABI II 19, 1419

Price: Jordan 200 fils

Jordan celebrates 46 years since King's accession to the Throne



Regent to King: Rest assured we are directing our efforts towards solving problems in deeds rather than words

against foreign domination. On the eve of the anniversary, His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, the Regent, sent a message to King Hussein expressing his good wishes and noting that the Jordanian people take pride in the achievements accomplished in the past four decades.

Prince Hassan said that Jordan enjoys stability and security and is undergoing continued progress due to King Hussein's wise leadership and directives.

The Regent said that even though the achievements are great the responsibilities are also great and "we beg that Your Majesty rest assured that we are capable of handling these responsibilities and that we are directing our efforts towards solving problems in deeds rather than words."

He added: "We have faced unjust and unconstructive criticism which can only throw dust in the eyes of those working amongst us. The way to achieve reassurance is through renouncing greed and hostility which are the source of distress and tragedy everywhere. We will not be discouraged by the roughness of the road because our commitment and our will are strong and solid as they have always been."

In his message to the King, the Regent said: "We will pursue every effort to secure the needs of the nation in an atmosphere of security, stability and democracy because meeting the needs of the people is our most important objective as Your Majesty has mentioned in your letter addressed to me few days ago."

In celebrating the anniversary, Jordanians recall the King's untiring efforts in developing Jordan into a model democratic state and his sincere and

dedicated efforts to achieve Arab solidarity, and defend Arab causes. The King's work to move Jordan back into the foreground of regional and international momentum towards the 21st century has been recognised.

On the eve of the anniversary, the Jordan News Agency, Petra, said that the occasion represents a symbol of the continued sacrifices and achievements accomplished by the Jordanian people under the King's leadership over more than four decades.

Petra said that the King's endeavours continue on the path of political pluralism, democracy and respect for human rights.

As for the peace process, the King has spared no effort towards pursuing the attainment of the Arab Nation's aspirations in a just and comprehensive

(Continued on page 7)

Regent receives Congress team

AMMAN (J.T.) — His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, the Regent, received Monday a six-member U.S. congressional delegation on a fact-finding mission on bilateral relations and the Middle East peace process.

Addressing the visitors at a luncheon which he hosted with Her Royal Highness Princess Sarvath, the Regent spoke about Jordan's current efforts towards peace and security in the Middle East and means of promoting U.S.-Jordan relations, particularly in the economic and trade fields.

The meeting was attended by Prime Minister Abdul Salam Majali, Senate



Their Royal Highnesses Crown Prince Hassan, the Regent, and Princess Sarvath receive the U.S. congressional delegation on Monday (Photo by Boghos)

Speaker Zeid Rifai, Speaker of the Lower House of Parliament Sa'd Hayel and other officials.

Ensour calls for resolving Iraq-U.N. dispute peacefully

By Tareq Ayyoub
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Deputy Prime Minister Abdullah Ensour on Monday said Jordan is opposed to any military action against Iraq and called for peaceful means to settle differences with the U.S. over U.N. inspections.

Ensour, who was speaking to reporters during the weekly briefing, said the Iraqi people would be the party to pay the price in case of a U.S. military strike.

"We do not want any [party] to resort to military confrontation because the Iraqi people will pay the price," Ensour said.

Ensour was referring to Iraq's decision to halt its cooperation with the United Nations Special Commission (UNSCOM) following unsuccessful talks with the committee's chairman Richard Butler.

The Iraqi decision prompted UNSCOM to suspend its inspection activities.

The U.S. Congress earlier this month approved a resolution calling for "appropriate action" by Washington

to bring Baghdad into compliance with its international obligations, such as disarmament.

Defence Secretary William Cohen warned that the U.S. has a "robust capability" in the Gulf and is ready for "any contingencies," after Iraq ended cooperation with U.N. inspec-

ned such a siege on any people... we hope that efforts will be directed towards lifting their suffering," Ensour added.

Meanwhile, Ensour said that the Kingdom wants to develop its relationship with Iran despite "major differences" between the two countries.

"Iran is an important state in the region and it is not wise to freeze our relations with Tehran... we want relations to grow despite differences in opinion between the two sides. Differences do not mean severing ties," the official said.

Ensour who was commenting on Foreign Minister Jawad Anani's visit to Iran this week who on Sunday handed over a message from King Hussein to Iranian President Mohammad Khatami.

Among the major differences between Tehran and Amman is the Kingdom's peace agreement with Israel, which Iran staunchly opposes.

"We want Iran to understand our position and circumstances and deal with us accordingly," Ensour said.

'History has never witnessed such a siege on any people'

tors. However, the U.S. said that it will judge Iraq by its "deeds and not words."

Ensour, in addition, urged the international community to lift the seven-year-old sanctions on Iraq, imposed after its 1990 invasion of Kuwait.

"We in Jordan do not wish to see blood shed in Iraq irrespective of the reason. We appeal to all parties to work in order to contain any developments," he said.

"History has never wit-

By Royal Decree:

Hourani takes over water portfolio

Ensour: Committee investigating crisis to submit report on Wednesday, next week

By Ahmad Khatib
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — A Royal Decree was issued Monday accepting the resignation of Munther Haddadin, minister of water and irrigation, after a public outcry over the contaminated water crisis that caused a nationwide panic since early July.

The same decree named Mohammed Hourani, minister of energy and mineral resources as acting minister of water.

Haddadin on Sunday submitted his resignation to Prime Minister Abdul Salam Majali requesting immediate leave from his post after deputies circulated petitions calling for his resignation on the basis that his ministry tackled the water crisis in a manner that lacked credibility and transparency.

The government had issued contradictory statements after the start of crisis when residents of west

Amman complained of foul-smelling water that had a strange taste and colour.

Initially, officials blamed unusual levels of algae found in the water on soaring summer heat, but later said the problem was caused by human and operational errors at the Zai Water Treatment Plant (ZWP).

Al Arab Al Yawm daily had published excerpts from a preliminary report by the American water consultancy firm, Stanley Consultants, highlighting the findings that the Yarmouk River, Lake Tiberias and Mukhaibeh had high concentration of faecal coliforms (body waste).

The report, a copy of which was made available to the Jordan Times, concluded that the ZWP was suffering from "severe constraints that have been added to the plant since its initial design."

"These constraints

include a Yarmouk River water source that has become highly contaminated with faecal coliforms, and a new source from Lake Tiberias which contributes high concentrations of algae and total organic carbon. Additionally, these abnormally high loading, particularly the algae, are not consistent over time," the report read.

Deputy Prime Minister and Information Minister Abdullah Ensour Monday said the committee investigating the recent water crisis will submit its final report on Wednesday, next week.

"The committee is working hard on the issue and it is too early to discuss any results," Ensour told the press during a regular briefing.

Upon the request of His Majesty King Hussein, His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, the Regent, ordered the government to form an independent com-



THIRSTY IN AMMAN: Youngsters gather around a fresh water tap to collect supplies Monday in the wake of the country's water crisis (AFP photo)

mittee to probe the crisis and pinpoint the responsible parties behind it.

The committee is chaired by Justice Ministry's Secretary General Eid Lawzi, and includes Ibrahim Badran, the director general of Palestinian Affairs at the Prime Ministry, as well as representatives of the general corporation for environment protection at the Ministry of Municipal Affairs, the Royal Medical Services and the University

(Continued on page 7)

Press savours 'last dance' before final endorsement of law

By Amy Henderson
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — As the press enjoys what is possibly its last hurrah while awaiting the Senate's final approval of the draft press and publications law, journalists and political activists hope that the lessons in democracy offered by this summer's tug of war between the public and the government will not be lost.

"We have always believed that our civil society is weak, that under pressure, people will follow the government line, that they will remain silent on crucial issues even though they have the right to act," said Hani Hourani, director of Al Urdun Al Jadid

Research Centre. "The press has recently challenged these ideas and shown us a different side of ourselves."

The country's newspapers have been under attack since 1997 when the government introduced temporary amendments to the 1993 Press and Publications Law, overturned in January at the High Court of Justice.

Since then, the atmosphere in which the press has worked has grown more formidable. This spring, the government stepped up a campaign against the newspapers in the courts and subsequently

(Continued on page 7)

Ensour defends House endorsement of draft Press and Publications Law

By Amy Henderson
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — The government yesterday defended the Lower House's endorsement of a draft press and publications law, expected to be handed to the Senate this week.

Deputy Prime Minister Abdullah Ensour yesterday told journalists the law was a victory for the press since it ended the executive's authority over the media.

"This law is an important step towards press freedom," said Ensour, during

a press briefing. "It upholds the right to investigate issues freely and express opinions at liberty. At the same time, the government was absolved of any control of the media, and all authority was placed within the judiciary."

The plenary Sunday voted in favour of a 60-article draft, which for the first time in the Kingdom's history, will allow the closure or indefinite suspension of newspapers at the Court of First Instance's behest.

The government's origi-

nal draft was subjected to a rigorous second reading by the House's National Guidance Committee (NGC) which dealt several blows to the government's proposal. It substantially reduced the capital requirement for weekly newspapers from JD150,000 to JD50,000 and scrapped a requirement that daily and weekly newspapers deposit bank guarantees worth JD100,000 and JD50,000, respectively in Ministry of Information accounts to

(Continued on page 7)



ARAB BANK
is honoured to convey to
HIS MAJESTY KING HUSSEIN
and to the Jordanian people
its felicitations and most cordial wishes
on the anniversary of
HIS MAJESTY'S ACCESSION TO THE THRONE.



ARAB BANK

Hizbollah fires Katyusha rockets near Lebanese-Israeli border

TYRE (AP) — Hizbollah members fired more than 20 Katyusha rockets in south Lebanon early Monday, and many landed near Lebanon's border with Israel, Lebanese security officials said.

There were no immediate reports of casualties. The rockets apparently were fired from a site close to Yater, a village three kilometers north of the frontier, the officials said.

The rocket barrage came after attacks late Sunday by Hizbollah on at least two out-

posts of the Israeli-backed South Lebanon Army (SLA) militia in southeastern Lebanon. Details of the attacks were not immediately available.

No casualties were reported in those attacks either, said the officials. They spoke on condition of anonymity.

Israel has maintained a self-styled "security zone" in southern Lebanon since 1986 to try to protect against cross-border guerrilla raids.

In Israel, Israeli radios said that three road-side bombs

exploded overnight as Israeli patrols were passing.

They said that a number of vehicles were slightly damaged and that one Israeli soldier was treated for shock.

The Israeli army said that on Sunday, Hizbollah forces attempted to attack an SLA post in southeastern Lebanon.

One of the Hizbollah members reached a guard post, and an Israeli soldier fought him off until other troops arrived, the army said. It said the Hizbollah member fled,

leaving his weapons behind.

The Sunday attacks were claimed by the Shiite Muslim Amal movement.

Israel responded with shell fire toward suspected Amal and Hizbollah hideouts. A 70-year-old Lebanese man was wounded when a mortar shell crashed close to his house in Majdal Zoun, which is near Yater.

The area around Yater often has been used by Hizbollah group as a launching pad for attacks on Israeli troops and its allied militia.



FLOODS IN TURKEY: An aerial photo shows buildings damaged by floodwater which swept through the Beskoy village, east of the Black Sea city of Trabzon, on Sunday. Seven people have died and around 50 are reported missing after floods swept through the village near Turkey's eastern Black Sea coast. The flooding was out of step with a heatwave that has swept much of the rest of Turkey over the last two weeks (Reuters photo)

25 armed Islamists killed in Algeria — press

ALGIERS (AFP) — Security forces killed 25 armed Islamists in the last few days in the west of the country, where a number of massacres left more than 50 dead in recent weeks, local press reported Monday.

Nineteen armed Islamists died during an army operation still underway in the areas of Taret and Saïda, where village massacres July 26 and August 2 left around 30 dead, the dailies L'Authentique and Le Quotidien d'Oran said.

This sweeping operation was launched in the wake of the recent spate of massacres, the papers said, which L'Authentique attributes to the Al Ahouel (Terror) wing of the Armed Islamic Group (GIA). The other six Islamists were killed Saturday in Medea, in the south, the paper La Nouvelle Republique reported.

Press estimates of casualties are often exaggerated and rarely confirmed by the security forces.

Security forces said last week that they had killed 141 armed Islamists in around 30 operations between January and July this year.

Palestinian rights group says inmate beaten to death in jail

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (AFP) — A human rights group charged on Monday that a West Bank man who died in the hands of Palestinian security forces this week was killed by head injuries and not heat stroke as reported by police.

Walid Al Qawasmî, a 45-year-old insurance salesman from Bethlehem, died Sunday while being taken to hospital from the jail in the Palestinian-run Jordan Valley enclave of Jericho, Palestinian National Authority officials said.

Police said Qawasmî apparently died of a heat stroke in his cell as temperatures in the Jericho area soared to 47 degrees centigrade amid a region-wide heat wave.

An autopsy was ordered as part of a Palestinian police investigation of the death of Qawasmî, who was jailed in July on suspicion of financial crimes linked to the insurance office he managed.

The Palestinian Human Rights Monitoring Group disputed the official account of Qawasmî's death.

"Eye witnesses who took part in the autopsy told the Palestinian Human Rights Monitoring Group that Qawasmî died from a haemorrhaging of the brain caused by a fracture in his skull," the group said in a statement.

"The fracture was caused by severe beating to the head," the group said.

A Palestinian intelligence

official rejected the allegations and accused the right group of spreading "lies and nonsense."

"Initial medical tests conducted by the prison doctor showed that the prisoner died because of the heat," the official told AFP on condition of anonymity.

"The cut to the head was not deep and happened when the prisoner fell down two weeks ago," the official said.

On Sunday the chief of Palestinian police intelligence in the West Bank, Tawfiq Al Tarawi, said he had ordered an autopsy and a full investigation into the death.

The coroner was due to submit his official report to the Palestinian justice ministry later on Monday.

Somali faction fires at ship docking in Mogadishu port

MOGADISHU (AFP) — Militiamen fired an anti-tank missile on a commercial ship that was trying to dock at the main Mogadishu port early Monday, security officials at the new Mogadishu Authority told AFP.

The officials said the weapon, fired by militiamen loyal to Somali warlord Hussein Haji Bad and Musa Sudi Yalahow — who are bitter foes of north Mogadishu strongman Ali Mahdi Muhammad — missed

its target, but forced the ship back into international waters.

Mogadishu's main seaport was officially opened on Friday by Ali Mahdi, who promised adequate security to enable it function properly.

"We guarantee the business and humanitarian communities that uninterrupted work will continue at Mogadishu's main seaport," Ali Mahdi said.

But Bad and Sudi opposed the move and warned that their militiamen would use force to

stop the reopening of Mogadishu airport and seaport, closed in 1995 after warring factions disagreed over the share of their revenues.

Ali Mahdi, Hussein Mohammad Aided and Mohammad Qanyare Afiah recently established a joint administration for the Somali capital, divided since the overthrow of dictator Mohammed Siad Barre in 1991, thereby paving way for the reopening of the two facilities.

Iran calls for U.N. action to free diplomats in Afghanistan

TEHRAN (AFP) — Iran urged the United Nations Monday to take urgent action to secure the release of 10 of its diplomats and a journalist kidnapped by the Taliban Islamist militia in Afghanistan at the weekend.

Foreign Minister Kamal Kharazi sent a letter to U.N. Secretary General Kofi Annan calling for "multi-faceted efforts and immediate help" to get its nationals freed, the official IRNA news agency reported.

Iran says the diplomats and an IRNA correspondent were seized after a raid by the militia on its mission in Mazare-Sharif, a city in northern Afghanistan which was captured by the militia Saturday from the anti-Taliban opposition.

Iran state radio said the kidnapped Iranians had been transferred to the Taliban stronghold of Kandahar in eastern Afghanistan.

The radio, citing foreign ministry officials, also said it had information that the Iranians "are in good health" despite an earlier statement from a Taliban official that

they may have died.

Militia spokesman Wakil Ahmad Mutawakil said Sunday the diplomats were not in the Iranian consulate in the anti-Taliban stronghold when their forces rolled in Saturday.

"They might have gone with retreating forces, they may have hidden or they may have been killed," Mr. Mutawakil said. "When the Taliban went into the consulate there was nobody there."

He said the diplomats had not been identified among any prisoners captured by the hardline militia, and described allegations from Tehran that they had been kidnapped as "totally baseless."

But in a telephone conversation with Pakistani Foreign Minister Sartaj Aziz, Mr. Kharazi rejected Taliban's claim.

"This is not true. There is no doubt they are in the hands of the Taliban," he said, adding that Islamabad and the Taliban "bear responsibility for the lives and safety of the staff at Iran's consulate" in Mazare-Sharif.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Palestinian student detained by Israel

BETHLEHEM (AFP) — Israeli troops arrested the president of the Bethlehem University student union on Monday as he was travelling between Bethlehem and Ramallah on the West Bank, relatives said. Amin Hussein Kamel, 27, was detained by troops guarding the main Israeli checkpoint between Arab east Jerusalem and the city of Ramallah, his brother Imad Kamel said. "He was arrested about noon as he tried to pass through the checkpoint south of Ramallah," Imad Kamel told AFP. An Israeli army spokeswoman was unable to comment immediately. Amin Kamel is in the Fateh movement of Palestine President Yasser Arafat and spent six years in Israeli jails in the late 1980s and early 1990s for activities linked to the intifada uprising against Israeli occupation.

Heat claims 10 more victims in Cyprus

NICOSIA (AP) — A blistering heat wave claimed 10 more lives overnight on the island of Cyprus, the Health Ministry said Monday. The latest deaths raised to 45 the number of people who have died since Friday. Many of the victims were elderly. Weathermen said temperatures were expected to rise again to 43 degrees Celsius. That temperature is the highest recorded in more than 40 years, the weather bureau said.

Iran to set up labour camps for addicts

TEHRAN (AP) — Iran plans to set up labour camps for drug addicts, and prisoners currently jailed for drug offenses will be moved to them, the official Islamic Republic News Agency (IRNA) reported Monday. The agency said the camps would be ready by next March. It did not say how many camps would be built or where they will be. It also gave no figures for the number of jailed addicts or what kind of medical treatment would be available for them. IRNA quoted the country's judiciary chief, Ayatollah Mohammad Yazdi, as saying that after the camps are set up, drug addicts detained by police would be sent there rather than to prisons.

Turkish homosexuals seek asylum

AMSTERDAM (AFP) — Two Turkish homosexuals have asked for political asylum here because they said they had been persecuted for their sexual preference in their homeland, the Dutch news agency ANP reported Monday. The men were in Amsterdam to attend last week's Gay Games during which they held a traditional Islamic prayer session in draw attention to the plight of homosexuals in Turkey. The unidentified men, founders of the officially-unrecognised Islamic Home Union in Turkey, will be sent to an asylum seekers centre where their case will be considered, a police spokesman said.

Turkey wants AWACS, missiles to strengthen defence

ANKARA (AFP) — The Turkish government wants to equip its armed forces with AWACS radar surveillance planes and build its own missiles to bolster its air defences, press reports said here Monday.

On July 25, the ministry of industry and defence (SSM) invited three American and an Israeli company to bid for the sale of four high-altitude AWACS planes to Turkey, they said.

Plans to buy the new equipment, which will cost at least \$800 mil-

lion, form part of Turkey's programme of modernisation within its armed forces.

The U.S. firms are Lockheed Martin Corp., Northrop Grumman Corp., and Boeing Co., while the one from Israel is Phalcon.

According to the centre-left daily Cumhuriyet, Turkey also wants to produce missiles to strengthen its aerial defences against neighbours Greece to the west, Syria to the south and Iran to the east.

Turkey already has a joint project

with Israel to produce surface-to-air missiles.

According to Cumhuriyet, a British military delegation is expected in Ankara in September to explore the possibility of joint production of Rapier 2 missiles.

Last Friday, Turkey made clear its unhappiness with recent Iranian missile tests, and with the sale to Greece just approved by the Pentagon of portable surface-to-air Stinger missiles.

Ankara fears that some of this

equipment might fall into the hands of the Turkish separatist Kurdish Labour Party (PKK), which is waging an armed uprising against the government.

Furthermore, Ankara opposes the installation of S-300 missiles in ethnic Greek territory in Cyprus as they could be transformed into offensive weapons and threaten Turkish-Cypriots, as well as the Turkish mainland.

In a wide-ranging programme, aimed at upgrading its weapons sys-

tems, Turkey foresees spending \$150 billion over the next 30 years to provide for local production of military equipment.

Already agreed on is a \$575 million contract with Germany's military shipbuilders HDW for joint production in Turkey of four new submarines for the Turkish navy.

The U.S. company Sikorsky Aircraft is also reportedly close to reaching an agreement with Turkey to sell military helicopters worth about \$700 million.

JORDAN TELEVISION

Tel. 4773111-19

PROGRAMME TWO

15:10Cartoon — The Pink Panther

15:30Snail Talk — "Quiz Show"

16:00Border Town — "Baby It's You"

16:30D.V. — "Skeleton Coast"

17:00D.V. — "French Programmes — Les Cœurs Brûlés"

19:00Le Journal

19:15French Programme — "Fractures"

19:30News headlines

19:35Step by Step — "Snow Bunnies"

20:00What Would You Do? — "Encounter"

21:10Mini-series — "News in English"

22:30Feature film — "The Sound of Music"

23:59Metro Café

00:30End of T.X.

PRAYER TIMES

04:26Fajr

05:52Sunrise/Duha

12:41Dhuhr

16:21Asr

19:30Maghreb

20:55Isha

CHURCHES

St. Mary of Nazareth Church

Sweifich, Tel. 5920740

Assemblies of God Church Tel.

JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

WEATHER

Bulletin supplied by the Department of Meteorology

Relative hot weather conditions will prevail with temperatures dropping slightly but remaining above average by 3-5 degrees centigrade. In Amman it will be hot, windy, moderately moderate and sunny.

Amman 22/25

Aqaba 26/31

Deiratz 22/26

Jordan Valley 27/31

Yesterday's high temperatures:

Amman 26, Aqaba 42, Humidity readings: Amman 48 per cent, Aqaba 55 per cent.

Following are the highest temperatures expected today in the following areas:

Amman 25

Ajloun 28

Jerash 37

Um Qays 37

Madaba 38

Petra 39

Dead Sea 41

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

NIGHT DUTY

AMMAN:

Dr. Mukhlis Mazharah 492425

Dr. Abdul Hadi Tayim 462015

Dr. Wisam Hayawi 474863

Dr. Nizar Abu Zaid 412503

Al Asma pharmacy 4637055

Al Salam pharmacy 4636730

Shamsani pharmacy 4637641

Naimouk pharmacy 4624672

IRBID:

Dr. Ghazi Ta'ameh 252822

Al Quds pharmacy 1-1

ZARQA:

Dr. Ziyad Jghatim 992991

Khalifeh pharmacy 985417

EMERGENCIES

Focal Control Centre 4637111

Civil Defence Department 5661111

Civil Defence Immediate Rescue 4630341

Civil Defence Emergency 199

Rescue Police 192, 4621111, 4637777

Fire Brigade 4617101

Blood Bank 4775121

Highways Police 5334302

Traffic Police 4896390

Public Security Dept. 4630321

Hotel Complaints 5661176

Price Complaints 4667467

West & Seaway Complaints 4667467

Amman Municipal Complaints 4787111

Telephone Information (directory

AMMAN:

The Arab Centre for Heart and Special Surgery 5921191

The Islamic, Abdi 5664117

Hussein Medical Centre Tel. 5856856

Lazma 4630195

Khalil Maternity 4642816

Al-Khaleel Maternity 4642411/2

Jabal Amman Maternity 4642562

Mallat, J. Amman 4636140

Palestine, Shamsani 5407071

Shamsani Hospital 5401331

University Hospital 5133444

Al-Muasher Hospital 5667279

Al-Ahli, Abdi 5661146

Italian, Al-Muasher 4777101/3

Al-Bashir 4775111/26

Army, Marka 4891611/5

Queen Alia Hospital 5662240/50

Amal Hospital 5674155

ZARQA:

AMMAN:

Dr. Ghazi Ta'ameh 252822

Al Quds pharmacy 1-1

ZARQA:

Dr. Ziyad Jghatim 992991

Khalifeh pharmacy 985417

EMERGENCIES

Focal Control Centre 4637111

Civil Defence Department 5661111

Civil Defence Immediate Rescue 4630341

Civil Defence Emergency 199

Rescue Police 192, 4621111, 4637777

Fire Brigade 4617101

Blood Bank 4775121

Highways Police 5334302

Traffic Police 4896390

Public Security Dept. 4630321

Hotel Complaints 5661176

Price Complaints 4667467

West & Seaway Complaints 4667467

Amman Municipal Complaints 4787111

Telephone Information (directory

AMMAN:

The Arab Centre for Heart and Special Surgery 5921191

The Islamic, Abdi 5664117

Hussein Medical Centre Tel. 5856856

Lazma 4630195

Khalil Maternity 4642816

Al-Khaleel Maternity 4642411/2

Jabal Amman Maternity 4642562

Mallat, J. Amman 4636140

Palestine, Shamsani 5407071

Shamsani Hospital 5401331



MARKING ACCESSION DAY: A state worker Monday puts up a poster of His Majesty King Hussein on an office block in Amman. The King marks 46 years on the Throne on August 11 (Reuters photo)

NEWS IN BRIEF

King receives letter from Tarawneh

AMMAN (Petra) — His Majesty King Hussein on Monday received a letter from the chief of the Royal Court, Fayez Tarawneh, in reply to the King's letter expressing condolences over the death of former Senator Ahmad Tarawneh. In his reply letter, Tarawneh voiced his clan's appreciation of the King's sympathy.

Prince Hamzeh received by Sultan

AMMAN (Petra) — The Sultan of Brunei, Hassan Bolkiah, Monday received His Royal Highness Prince Hamzeh, who conveyed greetings from their Majesties King Hussein and Queen Noor. Prince Hamzeh congratulated the Sultan of Brunei on the crowning ceremony of Prince Muhtadi Billah. The Sultan of Brunei expressed his wishes for the speedy recovery of King Hussein.

Work on new college begins

ZARQA (Petra) — Arab Bank Board Chairman Abdul Hameed Shoman on Sunday laid the foundation stone of the College of Economy and Administrative Sciences at Hashemiyeh University. Shoman has donated a sum of JD2 million to support the university's scientific research programmes, and another JD500,000 to the university's general fund.

what's going on

SHABAB FESTIVAL/ZARQA MAIN THEATRE
 * Children's play "The Peacock" at 6:00 p.m.
 * Performance by the Iraqi National Group at 7:30 p.m.
 * Musical performance by Nahawand at 8:45 p.m.
 * Musical performance by Fou'ad Hijazi at 9:45 p.m.

FILM
 * Children's film "Bumper Special, Rosie & Jim" at the British Council, Jabal Amman on Wednesday Aug. 12 at 6:00 p.m.

EXHIBITIONS
 * Photo exhibition on old buildings of Salt entitled "Engravings on the Wings of Time" at the Royal Cultural Centre, until Aug. 13.

Crown Prince attends graduation ceremony of Royal War College

AMMAN (Petra) — His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, the Regent, Monday said developing and implementing new concepts requires a strong will accompanied by intensive follow-up.

Addressing the 10th graduating class of the Royal War College, the Regent said: "We, the government, Parliament, and civil society institutions, shoulder the responsibility to meet this goal through establishing a sustainable partnership based on a fruitful dialogue whose aim is to serve the public interest within the framework of the state of law and institutions."

Prince Hassan touched upon regional issues, pointing to the recent nuclear tests in the Indian subcontinent, which he said proved the ineffectiveness of the current security measures and arrangements to halt the spread of mass-destruction weapons.

The Regent called for strengthening these arrangements within a new framework of security that transcends the narrow military

concept to a wider one valuing human, political, social and economic security.

"Unfortunately, arms spending is on the rise at the expense of an intensive joint effort to support the regional development process," he said.

Prince Hassan said regional stability cannot be realised if development efforts fail to provide a dignified livelihood and social and economic security for people. He added that violence is an outcome of "desperate economies," a situation that will not end without adequate responses.

"The world no longer tolerates the existence of 35,000 nuclear warheads, and our region cannot stand to be treated... with a narrow-mindedness that gives priority to private interests rather than public interest," the Regent said.

"Arms exporting countries should change their unilateral outlook to our region and adopt a comprehensive view that takes into consideration the people's interests and aspirations in a prosperous, stable and safe life.



HRH Crown Prince Hassan, the Regent, flanked by HRH Prince Abdullah, Prime Minister Abdul Salam Majali and Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Abdul Hafiz Mirai Kaabneh, attends the graduation ceremony for the 10th graduating class of the Royal War College (Photo by Boghos)

"We in the region should rearrange our priorities and establish regional ties based on cooperation and integration," he added.

At the end of the ceremony, Prince Hassan presented diplomas to the graduates. Attending the ceremony were Prime Minister and Minister of Defence Abdul Salam Majali, Chairman of

the Joint Chiefs of Staff Abdul Hafiz Mirai Kaabneh, Special Forces Commander HRH Prince Abdullah and senior officers of the Armed Forces.

Court upholds 1995 death sentences

By Rana Hussein
 Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — The Criminal Court Monday sentenced five men to death for a second time at the conclusion of one of Jordan's longest trials after upholding their May 1995 convictions for murder and armed robbery. In its 100-page ruling, the Criminal Court reaffirmed its previous decision and handed down the death sentence again to Khader Jabbar, Mubarak Suleiman, Khalid Issa, Yousef Ayyed and his brother Imad, all members of a group known as the "Udwan Mills Gang."

Five other people affiliated with the group, including two women, had their sentences of 10-15 years in prison for "plotting criminal acts" reduced to seven years with temporary hard labour.

The five, who have been in detention since 1992, were released from prison "since they have already served their sentences."

The 10-member group, including eight from the same family, was accused of committing a total of 230 crimes, including the five murders, thefts, attempted murders, pos-

sessing automatic weapons, kidnapping, using forged documents and other violations.

They were indicted and charged with the murder of Second Lieutenant Mahmoud Eloun in Nov. 1989; Sergeant Ziad Awamleh in March 1990; Raja Lasha, a Sri Lankan housekeeper, in April 1990; Rasmieh Atiyat, a Madaba resident, in July 1991; and Emil Khashram, a Shmeisani resident, in Nov. 1992.

According to the Criminal Court's May 1995 ruling, the primary evidence used by the prosecution was the defendants' own confession to murder and robbery and their guilty plea.

However, the Court of Cassation ruled 10 months later that the Criminal Court could not base its sentencing on the confessions since "all the defendants claimed they were interrogated by the authorities under duress."

But in yesterday's ruling, the Criminal Court said "it was proven to us that the defendants were never subjected to any torture, neither during their detention or trial."

Regarding contradictory evidence that was found at

Khashram's house following the murder, the court said it was "confident that two of the five defendants were the actual killers."

Last year, the Criminal Court sent hair samples found under the nails of Khashram for examination to determine whether or not the hair belonged to defendants Imad and Yousef Ayyed.

The hair was found not to match that of the suspects. The two men, along with Khader Mubarak, were accused of robbing and killing Khashram, 70, in his Shmeisani home on Nov. 22, 1992.

"It was proven to us from the defendants' confessions that they committed the crime, because they told interrogators details that no one could describe unless he/she was present at the scene of the crime," the court said.

But the defendants' attorneys told the Jordan Times following the conclusion of the one-hour court session that they were not satisfied with the decision, "because the Criminal Court did not follow the Court of Cassation's ruling."

The five defendants released were Mohammad Ayyed,

Mohammad Ali, Mohammad Hassan, Amneh Mohammad and her daughter Nisrin.

They were convicted of participating in the thefts by renting cars that were used in the robberies and buying properties, including the Udwan Mills farm, with the stolen money.

The group was nicknamed the "Udwan Mills Gang" because they were captured in a police raid in the Udwan Mills village near the town of Sukineh.

The group has faced four different trials over the past six years, including one State Security Court trial, to which they were referred when they were first captured by the authorities.

The courts heard more than 200 witnesses in one of the longest cases ever held in the Kingdom.

Two other persons allegedly affiliated with the group were found innocent by the Criminal Court in May 1995.

Monday's verdict, which was handed down by Justices Mohammad Ajameh, Miftah Mubaidin and Issa Hamdan, will automatically be reviewed by the Court of Cassation within 30 days.

University students suspend hunger strike

By Tareq Ayyoub
 Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Four students protesting a decision by the administration of the Applied Sciences University (ASU) to suspend them have put a hunger strike on hold "temporarily" pending a final decision from the university to reverse the punishment.

A student council member at the ASU, who asked not to be named, said the students suspended their open-ended strike following promises from the administration to cancel the one-year suspensions.

He told the Jordan Times that the university administration had been scheduled to discuss the issue at their meeting yesterday but postponed it until its next meeting on Wednesday.

"They told us that they would look into our appeal and reconsider their decision, but if they fail to fulfil their pledge, we will have another word with them," the student council member said. He did not elaborate.

"The university chairman has promised to look into the matter in a fair and just manner, and we are awaiting his final word," he added.

The ASU president, Suleiman Arabiyat, was not immediately available for comment.

Rami Jabir, Mohammad Shadi, Ra'd Binar and Mohammad Lutfi started their strike on Saturday but ended their short-lived protest following pledges from the administration to reverse their decision.

The four students were dismissed for their role in distributing a statement on campus following the administration's decision to close the student council's campus office.

The statement called for an investigation of alleged "mismanagement" by the university's administration, among other demands.

Arabiyat on Saturday accused "outsiders" of attempting to politicise the students and interfere in the university's affairs. He declined to name these parties.

But the student council member denied Arabiyat's accusations and said their actions merely covered "students' issues."

"The statement that was distributed among the students did not include any political issue. Our demands are to extend more services to the students and improve the efficiency of the administration," he added.

Pilot agricultural projects under way to help women in poor areas

By Hind-Lara Mango
 Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Two pilot "permaculture" projects aimed at addressing health and environmental issues while incorporating sustainable development techniques have been introduced at a refugee camp and an impoverished village in southern Jordan, relief officials said Sunday.

The schemes, launched at the northern Hoson camp, which houses tens of thousands of Palestinian refugees, and the Ain Beid village in the southern governorate of Tafleib, are designed to help boost agricultural production to help women generate income.

CARE International Jordan, in cooperation with the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA), are backing the two schemes to help improve the quality of life of thousands of poor Jordanians.

"Permaculture, or permanent agriculture, enables people to establish productive environments providing for food, shelter and energy," Fadi Sharaiha, agricultural projects coordinator at CARE International Jordan, told the Jordan Times.

Australian agricultural engineer Bill Morton

developed the concept of permaculture in 1974 to create sustainable systems for the present and the future. It entails analysing the environment, available resources and needs.

Sharaiha said 35 women at the Hoson Camp have been receiving training in permaculture since January.

The project falls under CARE's agricultural unit for the identification of environment-friendly and socially-viable techniques to help those in need support themselves.

The \$50,000 Hoson Refugee Home Gardens project will be financed by the Canada Fund for one year before it can stand on its feet.

Through permaculture, women at the camp now use planters made from recycled rubber tires as well as barrels, balconies and rooftops to develop home gardens.

In addition, a special greenhouse has been erected for women to experiment with permaculture's various planting techniques.

"Women have been learning composting, rooftop water collection and storage, and integrated pest management, among many other organic farming techniques," Sharaiha added.

The women in the pro-

ject also use a bamboo structure called "Fatin's tent" to experiment with banana and mango planting.

Recycled water is being used in this project for home gardens and for the permaculture site as part of efforts to conserve scarce water resources. Participants also learn water harvesting techniques to collect water during winter for use in the hot and dry summer season.

UNRWA and CARE are providing women with planting materials under a soft loan as part of a revolving finance scheme.

"The project is implemented through UNRWA's Women's Programme Centre at the camp with the aim of contributing to the capacity building of local women's groups," said Suad Alwan, UNRWA social services field officer.

Such agricultural projects, she said, will contribute to improving home economics by providing refugee families with healthy and cost-effective products.

According to CARE officials, the success of these two projects will pave the way for setting up a regional training centre in Amman. Meanwhile, eight similar training stations will be set up in different parts of the Kingdom.



HEAT WAVE CONTINUES: A shepherd boy gives his thirsty goat a drink of water Monday in Amman. The country has been hit by the heat wave affecting Europe and the Middle East, with temperatures rising up to 40 degrees Celsius in Amman (Reuters photo)

Taleban in total control of Mazar-i-Sharif

KABUL (AFP) — Afghanistan's Taleban forces were Monday in total control of the northern stronghold of Mazar-i-Sharif after a two-day operation to mop up pockets of resistance, independent and opposition sources said.

A senior official of the anti-Taleban opposition alliance conceded several attacks had failed to dislodge the Taleban from the key city, but vowed a counter-attack was being prepared.

"Last night there was some fighting and some alliance troops succeeded in entering Mazar-i-Sharif and pushing the Taleban to the west of the city," ousted Kabul government representative Ahmad Wali Masood said in a telephone interview.

"However, due to lack of coordination and ammunition they were forced to retreat and the Taleban are now back in control of the city," he admitted.

Masood, the brother of anti-Taleban topgun Ahmad Shah Masood and diplomatic representative for the ousted Kabul government in London, said a fresh counter-attack was in preparation. "Our forces are still gathering and are preparing for a fresh attack which could begin at any time," he asserted.

Independent sources said earlier that Mazar-i-Sharif — the last major city which had remained outside of Taleban control — was quiet, although several bodies were still lying on the roads after the fighting.

"The Taleban appear to be in full and overall control of the city," reported one source who asked not to be identified.

Taleban, posted at key junctions, had ordered residents not to leave their homes while the mopping-up operation was in progress.

Taleban officials said their forces were in positions throughout the city, about 450 kilometres north of Kabul.

"There are no opposition forces in Mazar-i-Sharif to even oppose us," said militia spokesman Abdul Haq Mutmaen. "We are in total control of the city and have also cleared areas to the south."

In Islamabad meanwhile, an Afghan information agency reported that a commander loyal to Uzbek warlord Abdul-Rashid Dostam and 500 soldiers surrendered to the Taleban in the northern province of Kunduz Monday.

The Afghan Islamic Press (AIP), quoting Taleban officials, said Abdul Qadar and his men laid down their arms in the Qalae Zal district and were taken into custody. It said they gave up after the fall of Mazar-i-Sharif.

There was no independent confirmation.

It was the Taleban's third attempt to take Mazar-i-Sharif after they were brutally cut down in the maze of dusty streets in May 1997 when they were double-crossed by a short-lived ally.

In May 1997 the Taleban seized control of Mazar-i-Sharif after joining ranks with Abdul Malik, a former Dostam ally.

But when a deal over power-sharing broke down, Malik returned to the opposition fold and massacred at least 2,500 Taleban soldiers.

The Taleban also entered the city limits last September but their forces were beaten back in heavy

fighting.

The anti-Taleban alliance includes Dostam, the ousted government of president Burhanuddin Rabbani and topgun Ahmad Shah Masood, the Shiite Hezb-i-Wahdat and several other splinter groups.

Meanwhile, Iran urged the United Nations Monday to take "urgent" action to secure the release of 10 of its diplomats and a journalist whom it says were kidnapped by the Taleban in Mazar-i-Sharif.

Foreign Minister Kamal Kharazi sent a letter to U.N. Secretary General Kofi Annan calling for "multi-faceted efforts and immediate help" to free its nationals, the official IRNA news agency reported.

Iran says the diplomats and an IRNA correspondent were seized after a raid by the militia on its mission in Mazar-i-Sharif.

Iran state radio said the kidnapped Iranians had been transferred to the Taleban stronghold of Kandahar in eastern Afghanistan.

The radio, citing foreign ministry officials, also said it had information the Iranians "are in good health" despite an earlier statement from a Taleban official that they may have died.

Militia spokesman Wakil Ahmad Mutawakil said Sunday the diplomats were not in the Iranian consulate in the anti-Taleban stronghold when their forces rolled in Saturday.

The Taleban hold more than two-thirds of civil-war ravaged Afghanistan including the capital Kabul and have imposed what they say is the world's purest Islamic state.



Indonesian army commander General Subagyo Hadiswoyo, as head of military board in charge of investigating the kidnapping of political activists, speaks to reporters after questioning Lieutenant General Prabowo, son-in-law of former President Suharto at the military strategic force headquarters in Jakarta. Prabowo took the stand Monday in a probe into political kidnapping that could end his military career (Reuters photo)

Indonesian military quiz Suharto's son-in-law over abductions

JAKARTA (AFP) — An Indonesian military council Monday questioned a son-in-law of former President Suharto in the second week of an investigation into the abduction and torture of activists, Army Chief General Subagyo said.

"It is true that today (Monday), we have sought information from Lieutenant General Prabowo, Colonel Chairawan and also several witnesses," Subagyo told journalists shortly after the Officers' Honour Council met for close to seven hours.

He did not give the identity or number of the witnesses.

Prabowo Subianto, Suharto's son-in-law and two other senior officers, Chairawan and Major General Muchdi, are being investigated by the council over allegations of abducting and torturing political activists earlier this year.

"The investigation was about the cases of the disappearances, why Lieutenant General Prabowo did things such as this," Subagyo said at the army headquarters where the investigation took place.

Subagyo chairs the nine-member council set up by the country's military chief General Wiranto on Aug. 3 to probe the three officers over the alleged abduction and torture of scores of activists.

He has said the council would only make recommendations to the head of the armed forces, but should there be any indication of criminal acts, the officers under probe could also be brought to court.

Prabowo, the overall commander of the special

forces (Kopassus) at the time of the kidnappings, is married to one of Suharto's three daughters. He was the third and last of the senior officers to be probed by the council.

The council last week interrogated Muchdi, a former senior general of the Kopassus, and Chairawan, the head of a Kopassus special operations unit.

All three officers have been suspended from their current positions in the military pending the council's findings.

Council members have also visited the Kopassus headquarters in Jakarta where many believe the kidnapped activists had been held and interrogated.

"It is not true that there was an order (for the kidnappings) from the armed forces chief," Subagyo said, but he added general instructions might have been interpreted by Prabowo in his own manner.

"We are still gathering necessary data and hopefully we can soon report the findings to the armed forces commander ... We also want this to be done quickly but we will not be too hasty," Subagyo said.

He did not exclude further questioning of Prabowo.

Subagyo told the Republic daily in an interview carried Monday Prabowo and the two other officers questioned, would all have their own defence counsels, but he declined to elaborate.

The council will only make recommendations on the case to the military chief, he told the daily, adding any military commander, when issuing orders "is responsible for

the order and its implementation."

"If his underlings make a mistake, he (the commander) is responsible because the order came from him."

Wiranto has already admitted the Kopassus was involved in the kidnappings and preliminary results of a probe showed the Kopassus command had issued orders to "uncover several movements then considered radical and jeopardised government programmes and public security."

When announcing the council's establishment, Wiranto also said seven non-entitled officers and three privates would be brought before a military tribunal on suspicion of involvement in the abductions and torture.

At least 24 political activists have gone missing since early this year. Nine of them resurfaced after months of absence and spoke of being abducted, kept in solitary detention and tortured. Fourteen are still unaccounted for.

There has been mounting pressure for the authorities to locate the missing activists and bring those guilty of kidnapping and torturing them with electric shocks and beatings to court.

Prabowo was pushed out of his position as commander of Kopassus and reassigned to head the army's command and staff training college in Bandung shortly after Suharto was ousted on May 21 following violent pro-reform riots.

Prabowo, who arrived in uniform by car at 8:20 a.m. (11:20 GMT) was seen leaving the army headquarters through the back entrance around 3:45 p.m. (18:45 GMT), witnesses said.

NEWS IN BRIEF

U.S. lawsuit blames nuclear fuel plant for cancer cases

PITTSBURGH (AP) — A trial to determine whether a nuclear fuel processing plant is responsible for eight cases of cancer could set the tone for more than 200 related cases in the United States. Eight people who have cancer or represent others who died of the disease have sued Atlantic Richfield Co., Babcock and Wilcox Co. and B-and-W Nuclear Environmental Services Inc., the successive operators of the plant in Apollo, about 50 kilometres northeast of Pittsburgh. The trial, scheduled to begin Monday, is expected to take three weeks. The lawsuit, filed in 1994, will serve as a test for more than 90 personal injury cases, about 120 property damage cases and a class-action lawsuit seeking medical monitoring for residents. The other cases are on hold. The plant processed uranium as fuel for nuclear reactors and submarines from 1957 to 1978. In the early 1990s, it was torn down, and more than 22,700 cubic metres of soil and debris was shipped to a radioactive waste disposal site. Three state health studies and one federal study showed no unusual rates of cancer or birth defects around Apollo, near a subsidiary plant five kilometres away in Parks Township, however, studies found a high rate of cancer among female residents. Lawsuits by residents near the plant allege a uranium processing plant never should have been built in a residential neighbourhood. Alfred Wilcox, an attorney for the companies, said the areas where radioactive material might have become airborne were enclosed, and the air was filtered. Even if radioactive material was released, it probably had nothing to do with the cancers, Wilcox said.

Genetically altered food could harm human health

LONDON (AFP) — Genetically altered potatoes fed to rats resulted in retarded growth and reduced immunity, according to a Scottish study published here Monday which said such altered food products could also harm human health. The results of the study, done at the Rowett Institute in Aberdeen, drew an immediate call for a ban on such foods in Britain, where an increasing number of food products contain genetically altered ingredients. "We are assured that this is absolutely safe and that no conceivable harm could come to us from eating it," said Arpad Pusztai, the researcher who directed the 100-day study. "But if you gave me the choice now," he added, "I wouldn't eat it." The British agriculture ministry said the Rowett study would be looked at closely, but stressed that genetically altered food products approved for human consumption thus far posed no danger to humans. "All novel foods, including genetically modified foods, are rigorously examined... before they can enter the food chain in the U.K., and the government is confident that each food that has been approved so far is safe," said a statement. However, Liberal Democrat MP Norman Baker said: "The new health findings are very worrying and show that we have become the guinea pigs in a gigantic experiment." Baker last week revealed that genetically altered foods had been taken off the menu at the House of Commons restaurant. "The government has been irresponsible and lax, and the only thing to do is ban" genetically modified food, he said.

Prisoners in Hague tribunal jail planning uprising

BELGRADE, Yugoslavia (AP) — Prisoners held by the U.N. war crimes tribunal for the former Yugoslavia have discussed plans for an uprising following the death of a Serb suspect during his trial, a Serb doctor said Monday. Slobodan Ivanovic visited the tribunal in The Hague, Netherlands, last week, shortly after the death of Milan Kovacevic, a Bosnian Serb charged with genocide and crimes against humanity. Kovacevic was reported to have died of a heart attack in his prison cell. But Ivanovic said Kovacevic died slowly and painfully from a ruptured aorta. He said Kovacevic appealed for help for five hours, but guards failed to appear. "All prisoners, Serb, Croat and Muslim, banged their doors to call for the guards. They pressed the alarm bells but there was no response. When the prison cells were finally opened all the prisoners rushed to help Kovacevic," Belgrade's Beta news agency quoted Ivanovic as saying. Ivanovic said Kovacevic's death had a bad effect on the prisoners, most of whom reportedly suffer from depression. "What is more, an uprising had been planned and a general strike," said Ivanovic. The status of such plans since his visit on Aug. 1 wasn't clear. Asked about a potential uprising, a representative of the U.N. tribunal press office who declined to be named said: "Nothing is known to us. ... If there are complaints, they are always dealt with the charges."

BA sticks to ban on carrying Rushdie

LONDON (AFP) — British Airways said Monday that its ban on author Salman Rushdie travelling on its aircraft was still in force as it launched three times a non-stop flight between London and Tehran. The airline imposed the ban after Iran's late spiritual leader Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini issued a fatwa, or religious decree, in 1989 condemning Rushdie to death for "The Satanic Verses," deemed blasphemous by many Muslims. BA said that the safety of its passengers was "paramount." Foreign Secretary Robin Cook said earlier this year that Iran had offered oral statements that it would not send anyone to kill the author, but had not provided written assurances of his safety. A spokeswoman for the airline, which has been operating the flight with a stopover in Baku, Azerbaijan, said: "Safety is paramount to BA and we feel it is not appropriate to carry him. It is something that is always under review."

Estrada asks Communist rebel leader to come home

MANILA (AFP) — Philippine President Joseph Estrada Monday urged Filipino Communist rebel leader Jose Maria Sison to come home for peace talks. "I am inviting our objective — to lift the poor from poverty and make the country a peaceful and quiet place to live in," Estrada said in a radio interview. Sison, who founded the underground Communist Party of the Philippines in 1968 and is believed to be its chairman, has been living in exile in the Netherlands since he was released from prison in 1986. He has said he fears for his life if he returns to the Philippines and has sought political asylum in the Netherlands. The Philippine government said last week it hopes to restart peace talks with Communist insurgents early next month and Estrada has ordered his negotiators to complete the negotiations in one year. Peace talks which started with an agreement on human rights and humanitarian international law, yet to be signed by Estrada.

Cambodia poised to strike down opposition vote fraud complaints

PHNOM PENH (AFP) — Cambodian election authorities are poised to reject all of the opposition's hundreds of complaints of vote fraud and irregularities in last month's polls, officials said Monday.

Wholesale rejection of the allegations could ratchet up the possibility of a constitutional crisis as the opposition has vowed not to recognise the results of the July 26 polls and boycott parliament unless its complaints are resolved.

Official preliminary results show the winner of the election to be strongman Hun Sen's de facto ruling Cambodian People's Party (CPP), which will have a majority in parliament but not the two-thirds necessary to form a government on its own.

Rejection of the complaints, expected to come Tuesday at a meeting of the National Election Committee (NEC), would leave the opposition with only one recourse for redress of its grievances — appeal to the Constitutional Council. Cambodia's two main opposition parties, which say both bodies are biased in favour of the CPP, have submitted more than 800 complaints citing widespread abuses of electoral regulations in more than half the country's nearly 1,600 vote counting stations. But NEC officials said Monday most of those complaints were repetitious or lacked enough merit to be considered, adding that only 304 allegations had survived preliminary examination.

Tuesday, the NEC will look into those 304 complaints — 110 about voter intimidation, 172 recount demands and 22

instances where preliminary results are being rejected for other reasons — but is not expected to refer any of them to a formal hearing, officials said.

"These are the most serious, the ones that there might be enough evidence to take to a hearing, but maybe we will have no hearing," NEC spokesman Samraing Kamsan told reporters.

He said recounts already conducted at the opposition's request in seven municipalities in four provinces had turned up no evidence of the kind of fraud and irregularities alleged.

"Already we can conclude there was no cheating and fraud, just slight technical problems," Samraing Kamsan said. "We can conclude there was no widespread fraud or irregularities that could affect the results." He added many of the 11 members of the NEC had agreed.

Two other NEC officials reached Monday said it was probable the committee would reject most if not all of the 304 complaints and leave the opposition to appeal the decisions to the Constitutional Council. "That is their right if they want to do so," said one, adding he expected Tuesday's meeting to be one of the body's last.

The royalist FUNCINPEC party of deposed co-premier Prince Norodom Ranariddh and the self-named party of dissident Sam Rainsy, which placed second and third in the polls, have led the complaints.

They say election victory was stolen from them by the CPP and biased election officials who stuffed ballot boxes, counted votes without any independent

observation and left boxes liable to tampering during transport.

In addition, FUNCINPEC and Sam Rainsy have vehemently complained about an allegedly improper revision of the formula allocating parliamentary seats.

Monday, Prince Ranariddh and Sam Rainsy wrote to United Nations Secretary General Kofi Annan, outlining their concerns about the new formula.

"We put our faith in the United Nations to do what is in its power to prevent a procedural manipulation that would distort the will of the Cambodian people and have far-reaching consequences," the letter said.

Using the preliminary results from the election, the original formula would have given the two parties a three-seat edge over the CPP in parliament, a majority with the right to lead a coalition, but the revised formula gives the CPP the majority with a six-seat edge.

Senior NEC officials and a top foreign advisor to the committee have unsuccessfully struggled to convince the opposition that the change was not improper or illegal.

However, they have refused to release minutes of the meeting at which the change was approved.

The opposition has called for a complete NEC investigation, but Samraing Kamsan said Monday the committee did not have any more time to waste on the issue.

"We have no time to talk about that anymore," he said. "If they want to complain about that, they have to go to the Constitutional Council."

Fossett's balloon nears half-way to South Africa

WASHINGTON (AFP) — U.S. balloonist Steve Fossett was soaring over the Atlantic in his "Solo Spirit" balloon early Monday, well on his way to South Africa, officials at his mission control centre reported.

The millionaire's fourth attempt to be the first to circle the globe non-stop in a hot air balloon was "doing very well," said Barth Ray, spokesman at Fossett's mission control at Washington University in Saint Louis, Missouri.

As of 08:30 GMT, the "Solo Spirit" was over the South Atlantic at 33 degrees 24' south and 29 degrees 37' west, mission control reported. That would put him some 2,000 kilometres southeast of Rio de

Janeiro — almost half-way between South America and Africa. Fossett, who is travelling at a speed of 86 kilometres per hour, is expected to reach South Africa in about a day and a half, Ray said.

The eccentric balloonist sends regular updates to the centre via electronic mail from an onboard laptop computer, Ray said. Fossett however had been out of touch for several hours, Ray said. That was because he was catching up on some well-deserved sleep.

"He's just awakened from six hours of sleep and is doing very well," Ray said. Because of the extreme weather — the balloon is soaring at an altitude of 7,518 metres above sea level

— and cramped quarters, Fossett "doesn't normally get good rest like that," she said. Fossett has travelled a total distance of 4,417 kilometres from his starting point in Mendoza, Argentina, mission control reported. During his first night aloft, a fire singed the pilot's eyebrows and caused a slight burn on his left wrist. There was also a minor problem with two of four burners, which he had to turn off.

But Fossett believes he can continue the flight with the two burners. No such problems were reported between Sunday and Monday, Ray said.



Activists shout slogans at a protest in Yangon against the people of Myanmar. The photo shows activists in Burmese and English.

Thailand urged to resolve de

BANGKOK (AFP) — Thailand's military and police are urged to deal with the foreign-born activists in the country, who are protesting against the government's policy of allowing foreign activists to enter the country.

The Foreign Ministry said that Bangkok was not about the detention of three Thai activists, a larger number of foreign activists, and the government's policy of allowing foreign activists to enter the country.

The government's policy of allowing foreign activists to enter the country is seen as a threat to national security.

Japan de

TOKYO (AFP) — Ten people fell from a train in Japan, and a fire broke out in a train car, officials said Monday. The fire broke out in a train car in the city of Tokyo, and ten people fell from the train.

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World News



Myanmar activists shout slogans and hold banners outside the Myanmar embassy in Bangkok to protest against the arrest of activists at Yangon airport Sunday. Eighteen foreign activists were detained after handing out leaflets calling on the people of Myanmar to remember a massacre of opposition supporters ten years ago. Thousands of red leaflets in Burmese and English were distributed earlier Sunday at several points around the capital Yangon (Reuters photo)

Thailand urges Myanmar to resolve detention of 18 foreigners

BANGKOK (AFP) — Thailand Monday urged Myanmar quickly to deal with the case of 18 foreigners detained in Yangon for attempting to incite unrest by handing out pro-democracy messages.

Thai Foreign Ministry spokesman Kobsak Chutikul said Bangkok was concerned about the detention Sunday of three Thais, who were among a larger group of foreign activists trying to promote human rights and democracy in the military state.

"We are concerned

because they were given visas to travel to Myanmar, so apparently they are not people who the Myanmar authorities thought had a history of any activities against the government there," Kobsak told a press conference.

Six U.S. nationals, an Australian, two Filipinos, three Malaysians and three Indonesians were also arrested for allegedly breaching laws relating to national security.

"So many nationalities were involved, including many from ASEAN coun-

tries," Kobsak noted, referring to the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN).

"Again we are concerned that this will make a bad image for Myanmar and lead to more international criticism. We urge Myanmar authorities to do whatever they can to solve the situation."

Kobsak appealed to Yangon to respond to international concern about the activists and to be more open and to respond to inquiries.

"We are striving for the

same goals of human rights and democracy that the government in Yangon itself has said is its ultimate goal."

A junta official said Monday the 18 detainees were being questioned but had not yet been charged. He said they were being held in the Yangon Police Guest House and the capital's police headquarters.

Thai and foreign human rights groups, including Amnesty International, Monday condemned the junta and demanded the detainees be released immediately.

10 Japan workers poisoned

TOKYO (R) — Ten people fell ill from apparent poisoning after drinking tea and coffee in northern Japan and investigators have yet to identify the poisonous substance, police said Monday.

A morning break took a tragic turn at a Japanese company in Niigata prefecture, 334 km north of Tokyo, when 10 employees fell ill after drinking tea and coffee at work.

Police said they were investigating the incident, which shattered the calm of Japan's summer holiday period, as a poisoning and possible copycat crime.

"Turning ill right after drinking the tea obviously points to poisoning," said a doctor at the hospital where most of the victims are being treated.

Although preliminary tests of the patients' vomit showed traces of cyanide, further tests showed no signs of cyanide from the patients or the tea and water which the patients drank, a Niigata prefectural police spokesman said.

Police have yet to identify the poisonous substance and some experts have suggested the victims' symptoms appeared to point to pesticide.

A National Police Agency official drew a parallel with a mass poisoning that killed four people and made ill at least 60 others in western Japan last month.

"It could be a copycat crime, imitating what happened in Wakayama," the National Police Agency official said, referring to a July 25 incident in which people at a neighborhood festival were served curry laced with cyanide and arsenic.

Japan's opposition demands snap elections

TOKYO (AFP) — Japan's opposition demanded snap elections Monday as Prime Minister Keizo Obuchi battled for parliamentary approval of legislation to save the debt-ridden finance sector.

"The Obuchi administration does not reflect the people's will," Kansei Nakano, deputy head of the main opposition Democratic Party of Japan, charged at the start of the pleatory session of the lower house.

"What qualification and power does the administration have without facing the judgement of the people?" he said, demanding the chamber be dissolved for general elections.

Nakano said Obuchi's promotion to the premiership "can never be approved as he served as foreign minister in an administration with numerous policy failures."

Obuchi took office on July 30 after his predecessor, Ryutaro Hashimoto, quit following a devastating defeat for the ruling party in the July 12 upper house elections.

The new premier immediately shrugged off the demands for general elections and repeated his commitment to rescuing the world's second largest economy from recession.

"Our priority is to revive the financial sector reform. Therefore, I don't have dissolution in my mind," Obuchi said.

In Japan, general elections take place once in four

years or anytime after the prime minister dissolves the powerful lower house. The next polls are scheduled for September 2000.

"I have seriously listened to the harsh criticism people have made of my government and I will undertake the utmost effort and do whatever is necessary to revive the economy," the premier told parliament.

"I will face the judgement by making an all out effort to put the economy on a recovery track within one or two years," he said.

Obuchi's reply was greeted by hooting from opposition party members.

Concerns over the new premier's commitment to economic reform and the opposition's possible hampering of banking sector rescue legislation sent the yen and stock market falling.

The key Nikkei Stock Average of the Tokyo Stock Exchange dropped 1.3 per cent to end the session at 15,626.42.

The yen declined to 146.64-66 against the dollar here late Monday, close to its eight-year low of 146.75, from 145.53-55 - here Friday.

Russell Jones, chief economist at Lehman Brothers, said the currency's drop was fuelled by uncertainty over the banking sector reform programme and disappointment in Obuchi.

Markets had hoped in vain, he said, that at "some time, at some stage this government may offer a pleasant surprise, some-

thing more than the market was expecting." Investors were haunted by uncertainty over the banking sector legislation and fears about the "government's commitment to taking the tough decisions," Jones said.

Nakano said the new prime minister must "share the responsibility for economic mismanagement of the Hashimoto administration" and "listen to proposals from the opposition side."

Obuchi has called for the opposition's cooperation in passing six crucial bills aimed at cleaning up Japan's debt-ridden finance sector, but the opposition demanded amendments to the legislation.

"I will listen to proposals prepared by the opposition groups and aim to enact laws as soon as possible by seeking their understanding and cooperation," Obuchi said.

He said he wanted to speed up legislation to inject public money for the rescue of the financial industry, plagued by an estimated 87.5 trillion yen (\$621 billion dollars) in bad debt.

After 10 days in office, Obuchi said in his inaugural policy speech last Friday he would "stake his political life" on saving Japan's recession-hit economy.

His promised cuts in income and corporate taxes exceeding six trillion yen and extra government spending to revive the economy of more than 10 trillion yen.

Russia digs in heels over strikes against Belgrade

MOSCOW (AFP) — Russia dug its heels in Monday against NATO strikes in Kosovo, rejecting talk of military intervention in the strife-torn Yugoslav province until all diplomatic channels were exhausted.

"The situation right now in Kosovo has not yet met the U.N. criteria for intervention," foreign ministry spokesman Valery Nestersukhin told AFP.

"The current discussions about the use of force encourage extremists to toughen their stance," he said. "We believe that the existing diplomatic tools have not yet been exhausted."

The spokesman's comments came after British Foreign Secretary Robin Cook warned the West was now ready to take military action against Yugoslav forces sent by Belgrade to crush a rebellion by ethnic Albanian separatists.

But while London's stance is backed by Washington, a fellow U.N. Security Council member, French President Jacques Chirac told his U.S. coun-

terpart Bill Clinton Friday that Paris would insist any strikes are approved by the U.N. Security Council.

Russia's envoy to the region, Deputy Foreign Minister Nikolai Afanasyevsky, made Russia's opposition to military action crystal clear Sunday, saying: "No one can explain what the aim of such external interference would be, or what it could contribute other than new complications and an inevitable radicalisation."

That meant that "if NATO intervention were to come before the U.N. Security Council right now, the Russians would veto," said one Western diplomat in post here.

"The official Russian position is based on the assumption that the Kosovo problem is an internal problem of Yugoslavia," said Vitaly Naumkin, head of the Russian Centre of Strategic Research and International Studies.

"It's like Chechnya for Russia," he said, a reference to Moscow's struggle to prevent the secession of its

rebellious Caucasus republic.

Russia's stance is also based on Moscow's hostility to seeing its former foe NATO active in an area it still considers as its sphere of influence, said Yevgey Kostilev, of Moscow's Institute of Political Studies.

"Accepting an accord with the United States for an intervention in Kosovo would be to accept giving up its ambitions in Eastern Europe. That is out of the question," he said.

Moscow, a traditional ally of its fellow Orthodox Christians the Serbs, has been pursuing a twin-track approach to the conflict: respect for Yugoslavia's territorial integrity and broad autonomy for the ethnic Albanian majority province.

Vitaly Naumkin said the type of intervention called for would determine Moscow's final position.

"It's one thing when this kind of intervention is going to protect borders from refugees," he said, but if "it's intervention on the

basis of some kind of decision about going into Yugoslavia, I think it will still be regarded by Russia as interference in (its) internal affairs."

However, Russia may toe the Western line if push comes to shove, he said, recalling how Russia first opposed the arms embargo against Belgrade in March and eventually hacked it.

"Russia is not willing ... to risk its relations with the West for the sake of the Serbs or Milosevic's policies," Naumkin said.

One scenario evoked by observers here involved a repeat of previous crises, where intense Western pressure, accompanied by threats of tough action, is eased by an eleventh-hour compromise brokered by Russia.

Diplomats here were sceptical that Moscow could save Belgrade this time. "So far the Russians have not proven able to secure any change of course on Kosovo, and Milosevic, has shown a talent for making promises which are forgotten moments later."

Kohl rules out coalition with opposition after election

BONN, Germany (AP) — Back from vacation "with a cheerful heart," Chancellor Helmut Kohl Monday ruled out joining the opposition Social Democrats in a coalition government after fall elections, saying such speculation was only meant to confuse voters.

"There won't be a grand coalition with us," Kohl said before the steering committee of his Christian Democratic Union held its first meeting after the summer break.

Social Democratic chancellor candidate Gerhard Schroeder, who has been leading Kohl in opinion polls, said last week that if coalition talks with the ecology-minded Greens didn't pan out, he would not hesitate to turn to the Christian Democrats.

Such a pairing of Germany's two main parties hasn't been tried in Bonn since the 1960s, although it is not uncommon at the

state level.

But Kohl insisted the differences between his conservative party and the traditionally leftist Social Democrats were too great for a coalition to work.

Attempts by Schroeder to steer his party closer to a "new centre" with business-friendly policies and tough talk on law and order "are not believable," Kohl said.

Kohl said he was optimistic about his chances for winning a record fifth term

on Sept. 27 and was going "into this decisive battle with a cheerful heart."

Asked whether he intended to serve the entire four year term, he said, "right now I first am going to win the election."

A Social Democratic-Greens coalition has been leading in opinion polls for months, but recent surveys show the government parties gaining ground to make the race almost neck-and-neck.

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Rights groups call for release of China activist

BEIJING (R) — Chinese and Western human rights activists Monday called for the release of a student leader in 1989 pro-democracy demonstrations arrested for trying to register an opposition party.

A group of 90 Chinese dissidents signed an open letter demanding that authorities release Wang Youcai and allow him access to a lawyer while in detention, the U.S.-based group Human Rights in China said in a statement.

Wang, 32, detained since July 10, was one of 13 dissidents rounded up in the eastern city of Hangzhou for trying to register the Chinese Democratic Party on June 25, the first day of U.S. President Bill Clinton's nine-day state visit to China. All except Wang have been released.

The letter stressed that the registration of a politi-

cal party was "peaceful, non-violent, in compliance with China's constitution and a basic human right stipulated by the United Nations Charter on Human Rights."

Police have refused to shed light on Wang's case. The Washington-based Free China Movement said in a statement it was "greatly offended by the Chinese Communist Party's recent decision to indict Mr. Wang Youcai."

Hangzhou police informed Wang's wife, Hu Jiangxia, by telephone Saturday that the pro-democracy campaigner was formally arrested on charges of incitement to overthrow the government, the wife has said.

If charged and convicted, Wang could be sentenced to life in prison, according to Chinese laws.

The Free China

Movement said Wang's treatment amounted to political persecution and proved Beijing's promise to Clinton to improve human rights and deepen reforms were "a complete lie."

During his visit, Clinton argued for human rights and greater freedom in China, raising hopes that the world's most populous nation could become more open.

After trying and failing to register the party, the Hangzhou dissidents had dropped their plan before Clinton left China, saying the challenge to Communist Party supremacy was too risky.

Washington has urged Beijing to release the Hangzhou dissidents, but China has objected to U.S. concerns as interference in its internal affairs, saying most of the dissidents were criminals.

Wang was paroled in

1991 after serving two years in prison for his role in student-led pro-democracy demonstrations around Beijing's Tiananmen Square which were brutally crushed by the army on June 4, 1989, with severe loss of life.

Wang, a physics graduate student at prestigious Peking University in 1989, had been sentenced to three years in prison. He was on the government's list of 21 most wanted student leaders.

Fellow dissidents had applied to police to march through Hangzhou's streets on Aug. 12 to call for Wang's immediate release. Police were expected to reject their application.

A group of 23 dissidents have written an open letter to President Jiang saying they were willing to accompany Wang and go to jail if he were convicted.

Indian PM pledges to breathe life back into nuclear power industry

BOMBAY, India (AFP) — Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee vowed Monday to resuscitate India's stalled nuclear power programme, but called on scientists to help keep power plant costs down.

"The main challenge today in India with regards nuclear science lies in the energy sector," Vajpayee told scientists at the Baba Atomic Research Centre in Bombay.

"We need to not only vastly increase the generation of power, but must also lower the cost

of production," he said.

India has seven nuclear power stations, most using pressurised heavy water reactors or fast breeder reactors that produce a mere 2.5 per cent of the country's energy needs.

"The cost of generating one additional unit of nuclear power is very low, but the overall cost of nuclear power plants must fall," Vajpayee said.

"That is a challenge before all of you."

The prime minister admitted the difficulties facing the country's nuclear power sector

stemmed mainly from chronic underfunding rather than technological shortfalls.

"I am aware of this problem and I promise you that the long-stalled nuclear power programme will be restarted," he said.

India's major cities suffer daily power cuts as demand far exceeds supply.

In June, Russia signed an agreement to build two light water nuclear reactors in southern India. New Delhi said the nuclear power project would be covered by

International Atomic Energy Agency safeguards.

Nuclear power co-operation between India and France, which relies on nuclear energy to meet three-quarters of its needs, was also discussed when President Jacques Chirac visited the country in January.

Critics have slammed India's nuclear power programme for being shrouded in secrecy, with a lack of public scrutiny and accountability resulting in wrongly low safety standards.

France wilts as temperatures, pollution soar

PARIS (R) — France wilted Monday as temperatures and pollution levels soared for the third straight day and forecasters predicted more of the same Tuesday.

In Paris, tourists and residents alike flocked to the city's many fountains so they could dangle their feet in the cool water.

The more courageous among them stripped off some of their clothing and waded right in.

After one of the wettest summers on record, an unexpected heat wave pushed temperatures towards 40 Celsius in central France and to 36 Celsius in the capital, the summer's hottest temper-

atures.

There was little wind, driving up pollution in the major cities.

Police urged motorists to leave their cars at home and take public transport. Young children, the elderly and individuals with respiratory problems were warned to take precau-

tions as air pollution remained at health-threatening levels for a third day.

A police statement said that motorists who insisted on using their cars should travel at 20 kph below the official speed limit to minimise harmful emissions.

Israeli finance minister warns cabinet on increased spending

TEL AVIV (R) — Israeli Finance Minister Yacov Neeman Monday urged the cabinet to resist ministerial pressure to increase spending in next year's budget, warning that exceeding the targeted budget deficit would undermine confidence in the economy.

"Our failure to meet this target would have serious consequences for confidence in our economic policy, and as a direct result, on the cost of borrowing and the attractiveness of the Israeli economy to foreign investors," Neeman was quoted as saying in a Treasury statement.

He spoke as Israel's cabinet began two days of deliberations on the 1999 budget, amid calls by ministers for a further easing of fiscal policy.

Neeman said the budget aimed to stem rising unemployment and — in a change of thrust from the

previous two years — to preserve a sharp drop in inflation. He urged ministers to adopt the budget without changes.

"There are two principles in the 1999 budget framework. First and foremost the desire to put a brake on rising unemployment in 1999... and secondly the need to keep to a consistent government policy by holding to the deficit reduction law," he indicated.

Although the budget has the backing of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, other ministers expressed displeasure with the spending package.

Industry and Trade Minister Natan Sharansky said in a statement Sunday that the government should raise its 1999 inflation target to 4-6 per cent. Transport Minister Shaul Yahalom called for increasing the budget deficit to three per cent of gross domestic product (GDP).

Neeman unveiled a budget plan Thursday he said would spur growth, create jobs and restrain inflation. He said the treasury would keep to its targeted deficit of 2.0 per cent next year, down from this year's projected 2.4 per cent, by offsetting an increase in the domestic deficit with a projected foreign budget surplus.

Neeman also announced that the treasury would target inflation for 1999 at four per cent, down from this year's seven to 10 per cent.

Netanyahu's government has come under growing pressure to loosen fiscal policy as the economy's slowdown enters its third year and joblessness grows. In May the unemployment rate reached an estimated 9.3 per cent, versus 6.5 per cent when Netanyahu took office in June 1996.

The treasury is hoping to boost GDP growth next

year to 2.5 per cent from a forecast 1.5 per cent this year.

Hopes for improved growth were given a boost last Thursday when the Bank of Israel agreed to cut its key lending rate 1.5 percentage point to 9.5 per cent. But analysts said a rate cut would not spur growth without a growth-oriented budget.

The treasury is warning that a wider deficit alone is insufficient to spur growth and the planned 2.5 per cent expansion cannot be ensured without changes in spending priorities.

"Increasing the budget and costly resources for consumption and transfer payments, at the expense of spending on infrastructure and other contributors to growth, could undermine our growth forecast for the economy," a treasury report said last week.

Sinai to get natural gas pipeline

CAIRO (AFP) — Egypt will build a natural gas pipeline to the Sinai to provide energy for new industrial complexes in the peninsula, Egyptian Oil Minister Hamdi Al Banbi said.

The 232-kilometre-long pipeline will be built at a cost of \$164 million and finished in August 2000, the governmental newspaper Al Ahram quoted Mr. Banbi as saying.

The pipeline will pass beneath the Suez Canal and link the Port Said gas installation 220 kilometres northeast of Cairo to the city of Sheikh Zeweld in the northern Sinai, where a gas storage facility will be built.

"The project will provide the necessary fuel for the new industrial complexes in the Sinai," Mr. Banbi said.

An agreement was signed for the project, which will be carried out by the Italian company Eni and Egyptian state firm Petrojet, the paper said.

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Major Currencies & Cross Rates									
Currency	USD	DEM	GBP	CHF	JPY	CAD	ITL	NLG	FRF
US Dollar	-	1.7785	0.8127	1.4838	146.43	1.5163	1754.30	2.0063	5.9640
DE Mark	0.6623	-	0.3443	0.8460	62.31	0.8623	686.34	1.1277	3.3536
GB Sterling	1.6320	2.9019	-	2.4370	238.94	2.4746	2882.32	3.2716	8.7306
CH Franc	0.6894	1.1837	0.4098	-	67.98	1.0193	1176.71	134.17	3.9904
JP Yen	0.0068	1.2142	0.4181	1.0196	-	1.0352	11.98	138.91	4.0705
CA Dollar	0.6896	1.2916	0.4225	1.0566	1.04	-	1270.80	1.4661	4.3265
IT Lira	0.0006	1.0134	0.3488	0.8851	1199.47	0.8640	-	11.43	3.3977
NL Guilder	0.4687	88.65	0.3052	74.45	72.96	0.7657	874.65	-	2.9716
FR Franc	0.1677	0.2982	0.1027	25.0377	24.53	0.2542	33.82	33.6200	-

Middle Eastern Currencies									
Currency	USD	JOD	SAR	BAH	QAT	KUW	AED	LBP	EGP
US Dollar	-	0.7090	3.7808	0.3770	3.6402	0.3071	3.6728	1517.50	3.4166
Jordan Dinar	1.4104	-	8.2900	0.5317	5.1343	0.4331	6.1803	2140.34	4.8216
Saudi Riyal	0.2666	0.1890	-	0.1005	0.97	0.0816	0.68	404.60	0.9118
Bahrain Dinar	2.65	1.8807	9.9491	-	6.68	0.8146	6.74	4025.41	6.0681
Qatar Dinar	0.2747	0.1948	1.0303	1.0303	-	0.0844	1.01	416.97	0.9391
Kuwait Dinar	3.2965	2.3088	12.2138	1.2276	11.65	-	11.66	4941.71	6.5361
Emirate Dinar	0.2723	0.1630	1.0212	0.1028	0.9911	0.0826	-	413.17	0.9308
Lebanese 1000	0.66	0.4672	2.4716	0.2484	2.3988	0.2024	2.4203	-	2.2527
Egyptian	0.2925	0.2074	1.0971	0.1103	1.0646	0.0896	1.0744	443.91	-

Energy		
Dile	Last	Low/High
Brent	0.00	0.00
W. Texas	13.74	13.81
Bonny	0.00	0.00
Dubai	12.25	12.37
UL Gas	135.00	135.00

Mid-East Currencies					
Currency	USD	DEM	GBP	CHF	JPY
SA Riyal	0.2666	0.4743	0.1837	0.39834	39.0516
AE Dirham	0.2723	0.48438	0.16683	0.40677	36.8804
KW Dinar	3.2965	5.79374	1.96521	4.86618	476.872
BH Dinar	0.3770	4.71921	1.62549	3.96354	388.5
CY Pound	1.906	3.3904	1.1675	2.8476	279.14

Metal Prices		
Metal	Bid	Offer
Gold (oz's)	285.5	286
Silver (oz's)	6.29	6.32
Platinum (oz's)	375.6	377.6
AL (3 Months)	1325	1326
CU (3 Months)	1028	1032
Zinc (3 Months)	1060	1063
Lead (3 Months)	660	663
NI (3 Months)	4160	4180

Libor Fixing					
Period	1 - 3 Months	3 - 6 Months	6 - 12 Months	1 - 3 Months	3 - 6 Months
USD	5.6484	5.6876	5.7188	6.7539	6.7539
GBP	7.6680	7.6653	7.6976	7.6975	7.6975
JPY	0.5742	0.5523	0.5523	0.6602	0.6602
DEM	3.4688	3.5273	3.6250	3.8125	3.8125
FRF	3.5000	1.8125	1.8570	2.0664	2.0664
CHF	1.6641	3.6625	3.6563	3.8320	3.8320
ITL	5.0200	4.6730	4.6110	-	-

Main Equity Indices					
Bourse	Index	Value	Chng	% Chng	High
New York	DOW JONES	8561.2	-36.82	-0.43	8597.25
New York	S&P 500	1085.09	-4.36	-0.4	1089.48
London	FT-SE 100	5896.6	-94.5	-1.66	5974.4
Tokyo	NIKKEI 225	15626.42	-202.75	-1.28	15800.4
Paris	CAC 40	3950.65	-61.23	-2.26	4015.1
Frankfurt	DAX	6478.26	-104.97	-1.68	6607.75

Energy		
Commodity	Last	Delivery
Coffee (c/lbs)	126.5	Spot
Cocoa (5/ton)	1886	Spot
Sugar (5/ton)	268.3	Spot
Wheat (5/ton)	27	Spot
Soy (c/lbs)	23.4	Spot
Tes (5/ton)	126	Spot
Barley (5/ton)	0	Spot
Rice (5/ton)	416	Spot

JOD Cross Rates		
Currency	Buy	Sell
US Dollar	0.708	0.710
GB Sterling	1.152	1.1578
DE Mark	0.3673	0.3693
CH Franc	0.4729	0.4753
FR Franc	0.1185	0.1161
JP Yen	0.4827	0.4851
NL Guilder	0.3523	0.3541
IT Lira	0.4027	0.4047

Iranian leader supports Khatami's ambitious reform plan

TEHRAN (AFP) — Iran's supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei has given his full backing to sweeping reforms announced by moderate President Mohammad Khatami to tackle the country's ailing economy.

In a letter to the president, Ayatollah Khamenei said the policies are "entirely correct and I approve them."

The Iranian leader also called on other institutions of the regime to help the government in its efforts to rescue the economy.

"It is everyone's duty to help the government in this respect. I wish you success in efforts to reform the economy and remove certain problems," he said.

In a televised address to the nation, Khatami pledged to aim for a fundamental revamp of Iran's economy as he unveiled policies to attract foreign investment, introduce bureaucratic reform and fight unemployment and inflation.

Khatami warned that the Iranian economy was "chronically ill" and

it will continue to be so unless there's fundamental restructuring."

He spoke of plans to fight red tape, limit the government's role in the economy, strengthen the private sector and take a string of other measures to encourage investment and increase productivity.

But many experts voiced doubt that Khatami would have enough room for manoeuvre — both economically and politically — for a rapid implementation of his programme.

"With limited and declining revenues, it will be difficult (for the government) to predict their yield," said a carpet merchant and exporter.

The country's economic crisis has been exacerbated by a sharp drop in oil prices on world markets. This year, Iran is expected to face a revenue shortfall of \$6 billion, or around a third of the budget.

Iran's central bank deputy governor, Mohammad-Jafar Mojarad, has said that his country could only count on \$9 billion in foreign receipts as opposed to \$16 billion

last year.

Khatami has promised to try to boost non-oil exports to ease reliance on crude revenues, which make up nearly 85 per cent of the country's hard currency earnings.

Other experts expressed concern that the president's announcement of his economic plan, already coming late, may have been too general and vague.

"This was a general outline of some economic policies. It may sound good in theory, but it is definitely difficult to put it into practice in our present situation," said the director of a small import-export company.

The country faces a foreign debt of around \$13 billion and each year it has to pay a big chunk of it along with interest.

Khatami also faces difficulties in introducing the necessary political reform to ensure the success of his economic policies.

He said he hoped to attract foreign investment, notably capital owned by Iranian expatriates.

But to change the presently discouraging investment laws, the president will have to secure the support of his conservative opponents in parliament.

His success will also depend much on the future state of relations with the United States and its Western allies, and whether or not Washington eases sanctions against Iran.

Khatami has already succeeded in improving relations to some degree with the European Union and encouraged the U.S. government to take steps to mend ties.

But he continues to face opposition at home from traditional forces seeking to ensure Khatami does not change the basic values of the 1979 Islamic revolution.

Realising his limitations, the president pleaded with the nation to bear with him and not expect a speedy economic recovery.

"My government is bearing lots of pressure for your sake. Our greatest asset is not people's patience. Let's hope the future will be better," he said.

IMF worried over U.S. protectionism, decline in development aid

WASHINGTON (AFP) — International Monetary Fund (IMF) directors have urged U.S. authorities to resist protectionist pressures and voiced concern over the decline in U.S. development assistance.

The directors, whose views of the U.S. economy expressed during a recent

meeting were summarised in an IMF statement, found that U.S. monetary policy was appropriate for the moment.

But they warned that "a tightening might be needed in the period ahead to safeguard hard-won gains against inflation."

Citing the slowdown in

Asia and the negative impact it has had on the U.S. trade deficit, the IMF called on authorities here "to strongly resist any protectionist pressures that could arise as a result" and reminded them that unilateral trade sanctions could be "counterproductive."

In addition, the fund's

board of directors "expressed concern about the decline in U.S. official development assistance as a ratio of gross domestic product."

They called on the United States to increase its commitments, notably as such an initiative could help reverse what has been a worldwide

trend toward declining official development aid.

The summary noted that the overall health of the U.S. economy had been enhanced by lower import prices, reflecting cheaper Asian goods, but said it "remarkably performance... owed fundamentally more to the authorities' skillful economic management."

Directors nonetheless cautioned that as labour markets were likely to remain tight and as some of the influences that have so far restrained growth would diminish, the Clinton administration could not relax its guard against inflation. But it added that given

Asian-induced constraints on growth and the sound budgetary policies of recent years, "the balance of risks suggested that the current stance of monetary policy was appropriate for the time being."

The directors, finally, agreed that the appreciating U.S. dollar had helped trou-

bled Asian economies that are trying to boost exports as a means of sparking a recovery.

They said the dollar would eventually depreciate as Asia recovered but predicted that the reversal would be orderly given the soundness of U.S. macroeconomic policies.

THE Daily Crossword Edited by Wayne Robert Williams

1 Across
10 Needless activity
14 Motel
16 Once more
17 Green-card holder
18 Adorable
19 Slow cargo
20 Second step?
22 Org. of Pepper and Webb
23 Otherwise
24 Hang around
26 Word with Creek or cruiser
30 Shore bird
31 Pin box
32 "Tollish" muppet
35 Pooped out
39 Shadings
41 Feedbag
42 Cacophony
43 Sudden
44 Experience
46 Slow off steam
47 Warm up
49 Incidents
51 Most secure
54 US-border lake
56 Long journey
57 Fourth step?
59 Light-bulb power unit
70 Flight on maps
71 Orchestra section

5 Down
1 Dross
2 Magnet end
3 Blue-pencil
4 "A Death in the Family" author

5 Canine condo
6 Machu Picchu builders
7 Apply blusher
8 Starter chips
9 Use piercing wif
10 First step?
11 Not likely
12 Marsh grass
13 Utter oaths
21 Memento
25 Algean part
26 Wagers
27 Raising on
28 Word with fish
29 Third step?
30 Lug
33 Hay storage place
34 Worldly West
36 Claim on income
37 Say it... so!
40 Discern
45 "Star Wars" princess
48 In

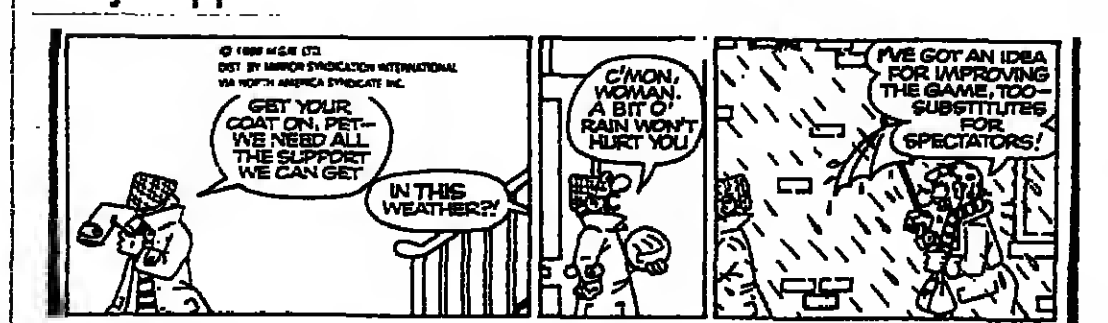
50 Array in one dimension
51 Barn bedding
52 Forum
53 Move designed to deceive
54 Dame Edith
55 Fill an empty flail

56 Opera solo space
59 Empty
60 Run without moving
61 back (relaxed)
62 Indigo, wood, and anil

Peanuts



Andy Capp



Mutt'n' Jeff



THE BETTER HALF. By Glasbergen



JUMBLE

Unscramble these four Jumbles, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.

LEETA
VAHNE
ENOMAY
CUSENS

Print answer here: A

Yesterday's Jumbles: FIFTY JUICY SUBURB RITUAL
Answer: Is there a difference between a wild horse and a tame one? — JUST A BIT

Business
U.S. and Jo
sign \$54.3 m
grant agree

By Tareq Ayoub
Jordan and the
U.S. signed two
agreements under which the
Jordan will receive \$54.3
million grant as part of
the U.S. annual assist-
ance program.
The first agreement autho-
rizes \$10 million grant from
the U.S. to repay part of the
Jordan's foreign debt bur-
den. The remaining \$44.3
million will be used to sup-
port economic projects.
The second agreement will
be a micro finance asso-
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The Jordan said.
The grant will be used
to support public and pri-
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vate businesses with the tech-
nical assistance and training
from Jordan. The Jordan can
use the grant within
the "one-stop" system.
The Jordan said.

HOROSCO

Best for Tuesday, Aug.
Linda C. Black, Tribune Medi-
cal
March 21 to April 19) Pluto
in your sign, there could be a
change in your life. You may
find yourself in a country or pe-
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April 20 to May 20) You may
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May 33 to June 33) You may
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World Basketball Championship

Yugoslavia is best of the rest; Americans get bronze

ATHENS (AP) — Who was prouder?

Was it Yugoslavian coach Zeljko Obradovic? His team beat Russia 64-62 for the gold medal Sunday in the World

Basketball Championship and did it — representing a country still crippled by war — without missing stars including the NBA's Vlade Divac.

Or was it American coach Rudy Tomjanovich? The much-criticized Americans — a composite of minor-league talent assembled in the last month when the NBA stars were locked out — won bronze thrashing Greece 84-61.

The gold was a record fourth at the worlds for Yugoslavia.

They might not have beaten an American Dream Team. However, a full-strength Yugoslavia just might have.

"After the embargo we played in four straight finals and won three times. It's incredible. We have a lot of reason to be very proud," Obradovic said.

"We had many problems, and players who weren't here. But we got this again," he added, cradling the gold medal hanging around his neck.

Center Zeljko Rebraca, playing where Divac would have, led with 16 points and 11 rebounds. Dejan Bodiroga, the (2.06-metre) 6-9 guard/forward, chipped in with 11 points and 5 rebounds and was named MVP.

Djordjevic, playing with a leg injury, added seven and took over at the end with Rebraca.

Yugoslavia showed again it plays the best basketball outside of the United States. Following the lifting of war sanctions, Yugoslavia has won the '95 and '97 European titles, and was second in the '96 Olympics to Dream Team III.

Not only was Divac missing, so was injured former NBA star Predrag Danilovic and retired center Zoran Savic. Also absent were two Yugoslavs with Greek passports who weren't allowed to play: forward Predrag Stojakovic, who will play next season with the Sacramento Kings, and (2.12-metre) 6-11 center Dragan Tarlac, who's one of the highest paid players in Europe with Greek club Olympiakos.

Russia, playing with the same core that lost to the United States in the finals in '94 — by 46 points — was led by Sergey Panov and Igor Koudellin with 14 points each.

"At the end, there were two great players, Djordjevic and Rebraca, who determined who would win," Russian coach Sergey Belov said.

For the Americans, guard Jimmy Oliver jokingly suggested he would gold plate his bronze medal.

"I'll have my bronze dipped in gold and you guys do the same," he told his teammates.

The Dream Team might have won gold, but this bronze was cherished by a cast of hard-working journeymen who have bounced around the NBA, CBA and European leagues.

They dropped the semifinal Saturday to Russia 66-64, blowing a 10-point lead in the final three minutes, but rebounded better than Greece, which lost to Yugoslavia in overtime 78-73.

"These guys got as much out of what they have as any team I've been around," said Tomjanovich, who has won two NBA titles with the Houston Rockets. "They had to do it in a vacuum with very little media coverage."

"We were the team with the fewest fans here and always in a hostile situa-



Yugoslavia's Dejan Bodiroga kisses the trophy after his team beat Russia 64-62 in the final of the World Basketball Championships Hellas 98, in Athens Sunday. Next to him is Vlado Scepanovic (AP photo)



Basketball fans celebrate Yugoslavia's victory over Russian in downtown Belgrade (AP Photo)

All 12 scored led by Jason Sasser's 23, 14 from Jimmy King and 12 by Wendell Alexis, Greece, which shot an abysmal 35 per cent overall, was led Dimitri Papanikolaou with 18.

"We're strong individually," said forward Gerard King, who played in Italy last season. "Everybody on our team has been through the rough times. We know what it takes to bounce back and come out swinging."

David Wood, a veteran 33-year-old veteran of 412 NBA games with eight different teams, exemplified the character.

"You always want to set your goals for the gold," he said.

"But I can't think of anything I'm more proud of than this medal. It is probably the greatest accomplishment of my basketball career."

U.S. Ambassador to Greece Nicholas Burns, a fervent basketball fan, even got into the act as he met with U.S. players afterwards.

"They really weren't a team when they got here," he said.

"They came together so much. We should really be proud of them."

It was a bitter day for an 18,000 home sellout at Olympic arena as Greece lost its fifth bronze-medal game in five years — all on Sundays — prompting early editions of Greek newspapers to read "Pote Tin Kiriaki" (Never on Sunday).

Playing off the famous film starring Greek actress Melina Mercouri. Despite the bronze, the U.S. misses out on an automatic berth in the 2000 Olympics, which will go to Yugoslavia and host Australia.

The Americans will have to play next spring and summer in qualifying tournaments, probably using CBA and college talent.

In consolation play, Spain beat Italy 64-61 for fifth place, while Lithuania edged Argentina 77-76 for seventh.

New NFL faces in new places

BOSTON (AP) — Peyton Manning and Ryan Leaf weren't the only big-name quarterbacks to debut in new places as the NFL's exhibition season got into full swing.

Doug Flutie moved slightly south from Canada to Buffalo. Neil O'Donnell wore Bengals stripes instead of Jets green and Jim Harbaugh took the opposite route of the Colts by going from Indianapolis to Baltimore.

While Harbaugh and Leaf enjoyed success, Flutie, O'Donnell and Manning struggled with their new clubs.

Harbaugh, obtained in an offseason trade from Indianapolis, went 10-for-13 for 60 yards and scrambled twice for 28 yards in Baltimore's 19-14 victory over the Bears. He left with 6:07 left in the second quarter after moving the Ravens 80 yards in 17 plays in a drive that consumed more than 11 minutes and gave Baltimore a 9-0 lead.

"We were playing little ball," Harbaugh said. "We'll try to get the ball downfield more, but we took what they gave us."

In other NFL preseason games, Minnesota beat New England 28-0 in the only game Sunday night.

On Saturday, Pittsburgh topped Buffalo 24-13, the New York Giants defeated Cincinnati 24-17, Miami downed Washington 19-16, Carolina defeated Jacksonville 30-27, Kansas City beat the Tampa Bay 17-13, Denver topped St. Louis 20-13, Green Bay beat New Orleans 30-7, Oakland defeated Dallas 16-3, Seattle defeated Indianapolis 24-21 and San Diego beat San Francisco 27-21.

Flutie played much of the second half of the Bills' loss to the Pittsburgh Steelers. He was 6-of-12 for 44 yards as the Steelers' reserves outscored Buffalo's 14-3 after halftime.

"It's another step forward," said Flutie, who at 36 is returning to the NFL at an age when many quarterbacks are leaving. "It was fun. It was exciting."

O'Donnell, who is battling Jeff Blake for the Bengals starting job, was 6-of-15 for 49 yards. Cincinnati turned the ball over to the Giants four times — leading to all of

their points. "Sloppy," Bengals coach Bruce Coslet said. "The Giants made their run last year leading the league or being second in the turnover ratio, and they continued that unabated tonight. We talk about turnovers all the time. Now we have to start taking about giveaways, and we gave away the ball way too many times."

• Vikings 28, Patriots 0: Minnesota's No. 1 pick Randy Moss caught a 44-yard touchdown pass, and last year's top choice, Dwayne Rudd, scored on a 34-yard interception return as Minnesota won at New England.

After neither starting quarterback could move his team, Vikings backup Randall Cunningham threw two touchdown passes and was 9-for-16 passes for 165 yards. He was sacked three times.

Minnesota starter Brad Johnson was 6-for-12 for 40 yards. New England's Drew Bledsoe was 7-for-14 for 74 yards with an interception and three sacks as the Patriots lost for the second time in two exhibition tries.

• Seahawks 24, Colts 21: Manning, whose first NFL pass went for a touchdown, was 8-of-15 for 113 yards and was outplayed by Seattle backup Jon Kitna.

After four handoffs to Marshall Faulk on his first series, Manning, the first pick in this year's draft, threw a 48-yard touchdown pass to Marvin Harrison.

Kitna completed 9 of 13 passes for 92 yards, including a 25-yard touchdown pass to Mike Pritchard.

The Seahawks (2-0) played their second game without No. 1 quarterback, Warren Moon, who has refused to report to the team's training camp in a contract holdout.

• Chargers 27, 49ers 21: Leaf, the No. 2 pick in this year's draft, led two scoring drives for the Chargers — capping one with a 3-yard TD pass to Bryan Still.

Leaf, 14-of-20 for 116 yards, had a more productive night than San Francisco's Steve Young.

Young threw only seven passes, completing three for 20 yards and was sacked once.

• Dolphins 19, Redskins 16: Olinde Mare made field goals of 27, 45, 50 and 46 yards in Miami's victory

over Washington. Dolphins quarterback Dan Marino, in his only series, was 6-for-7 for 58 yards, and running back Karim Abdul-Jabbar rushed for 46 yards in eight carries.

Redskins rookie Skip Hicks had 52 yards and a touchdown on nine rushes.

• Panthers 30, Jaguars 27: John Kasay, who kicked field goals of 38, 24, 27 and 29 yards in the first half, hit his fifth in as many attempts, a 30-yarder with four seconds left, for the win.

Carolina quarterback Kerry Collins was 16-of-22 for 162 yards and a touchdown and was not intercepted.

• Broncos 20, Rams 13: With John Elway in Minnesota with his ailing wife, backup quarterback Bobby Brister produced 13 first-half points for Denver.

Brister was 13-for-22 for 181 yards and a touchdown, and helped set up two field goals by Jason Elam. Rookie Brian Griese, who also saw extensive playing time, was 10-for-15 for 123 yards.

• Packers 31, Saints 7: Travis Jervy rushed nine times for 100 yards and two touchdowns for the Packers (2-0).

Jervy has rushed 14 times for 172 yards during the preseason, an average of more than 12 yards per carry.

Packers quarterback Brett Favre, who was only 1-of-5 for two yards and a fumble against Kansas City last week, completed all seven of his passes for 86 yards and a touchdown.

• Chiefs 17, Buccaneers 13: Kansas City receiver Chris Ortiz recovered a Tampa Bay fumble in the end zone with 44 seconds left, giving the Chiefs (1-1) a wild victory in the first exhibition game at the University of Oklahoma since 1976.

• Raiders 16, Cowboys 3: Jeff George was 6-of-11 for 128 yards and one touchdown in one quarter as he helped make Jon Gruden's Oakland coaching debut a success.

Dallas' Troy Aikman was only 1-of-6 for six yards in his brief appearance. Backup Jason Garrett was 5-of-9 for 32 yards for the Cowboys (0-2).

FIFA confirms Poland escaped suspension

ZURICH (AP) — Poland escaped suspension by FIFA with a last-minute move to comply with a deadline for the reinstatement of suspended administrators, world soccer's governing body said Monday.

Polish clubs and the national side could have been banned from all international competitions starting Monday.

FIFA and UEFA, the European governing body, had threatened to suspend Poland indefinitely if Polish soccer administrators suspended in May were not reinstated by midnight Friday.

"FIFA and UEFA will continue to study the situation within the Polish Football Association," FIFA said in a brief statement.

Sports Minister Jacek Debski said Saturday he sent a fax to FIFA 15 minutes before the dead-

line informing it the suspensions had been lifted.

The move came after the administrators agreed to an investigation into allegations of mismanagement.

The administrators had previously claimed they were independent of state controls and had refused to accept the sports ministry's appointment of a control board supervisor to examine their records.

Debski said he now expects voluntary dismissal of Soccer Federation President Marian Dziurowicz, which would open the way for reforming Polish soccer.

On Saturday, five scheduled first division games were cancelled in protest of Dziurowicz's failure to quit immediately.

The soccer federation, which is to meet

Wednesday, will decide on Dziurowicz's dismissal, the federation says.

Poland's national team, which achieved successes in 1970s and early 1980s, has not qualified for soccer's World Cup since 1982.

Debski blames administrators and soccer activists for corruption among players and referees, lack of training facilities and programs.

Polish club LKS Lodz can now look forward to a Champions League qualifying match against Manchester United on Wednesday.

After wins

ANTWERP (AP) — Patrick Rafter became the first Australian to win the Wimbledon men's singles title Sunday, defeating Richard Krajicek 7-6 (7-3).

Rafter, 26, had a clean five-match winning streak, including a victory in six matches against Rafter entering the final.

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Yugoslavia's Sasa Obradovic, right, tries to score as Russia's Vassili Karashev tries to stop him during a game Russia vs Yugoslavia for the final of the World Basketball Championships Hellas 98, in Athens (AP Photo)

TODAY AT	PHILADELPHIA '1'	PHILADELPHIA '2'	PLAZA	CONCORD	GALLERIA 1	GALLERIA 2	Hisham Yanes Theatre
	Leonardo DiCaprio...in THE MAN IN THE IRON MASK Shows: 12:30, 3:15, 6:00, 8:15, 10:30	Comedian Adel Imam...in AL ZA'EEM Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:30, 9:30	Comedian Adel Imam...in AL ZA'EEM Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:30, 9:30 Additional shows Thursday and Friday evenings at 12:30	CONCORD II Adel Imam & Yusra...in LETTER TO THE GOVERNOR Shows: 12:30, 6:00, 10:30 DRACULA Shows: 12:30, 6:00 DUMB & DUMBER Shows: 12:30 only	ABDOUN www.cns.com.jo/Galleria Comedian Adel Imam...in AL ZA'EEM Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:30, 9:30 Additional shows Thursday and Friday evenings at 12:30	ABDOUN www.cns.com.jo/Galleria Comedian Adel Imam...in AL ZA'EEM Shows: 1:30, 4:30, 7:30, 10:30 Additional shows Thursday and Friday evenings at 12:30	TEL: 4625155 STARTING JULY 13TH The Authority in the Service of the People Starring Hisham Yanes and the group For reservations call: 4640155, 4625155

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Sports



Patrick Rafter of Australia hoists the trophy following his 7-6, 6-4 victory over Richard Krajicek of the Netherlands in the final of the du Maurier Open tennis tournament (AP photo)

Rafter wins Toronto Open

TORONTO (AP) — Patrick Rafter became the first player in 10 years to win the du Maurier Open without losing a set Sunday when he beat Richard Krajicek 7-6 (7-3), 6-4.

The 25-year-old Australian had a clean slate in five matches, matching Ivan Lendl's feat accomplished in 1988.

Krajicek, who had victories in six of seven matches against Rafter entering the final, had lived by the serve and volley in his previous matches against Rafter. Krajicek entered the final leading the entire du Maurier field with 64 aces but was limited to dealing 10 to Rafter, putting only 59 per cent of first serves in play.

"I couldn't punish him on my serve," Krajicek said. "That's a shame."

Both players bled serve their first six times in the first set, setting up the tiebreaker, where Krajicek began to struggle. Rafter scored minibreaks all three times Krajicek missed his first serve to take the tiebreaker 7-3.

The Dutchman also struggled on his groundstrokes. His weak backhand seldom cleared the net and his forehand, usually a

terror to opposing players, faded as well.

"He really destroys me a lot with that forehand and the times that I did go there I got lucky on them," Rafter said.

"I went there at the right times," said Krajicek. "I count on my forehand more and it really let me down."

Krajicek broke Rafter to go up 3-1 in the second set, but he lost his serve the very next game, with two consecutive double-faults that gave Rafter a break. Rafter broke Krajicek again for a 4-3 lead and the two players traded holds to give Rafter a 5-4 lead. Rafter then held to love to win the set 6-4.

"He was mixing up his serve pretty good," Krajicek said.

"He was all over the place, quick and slow, and it made it a lot tougher for me," Rafter, who defends his U.S. Open title in a few weeks, earned \$ 361,000 and will move from fifth to third in the ATP world rankings Monday. He also became the first Australian to win this event since John Newcombe in 1971, two years before Rafter was born.

Krajicek received \$ 190,000.

Italian prosecutor summons outspoken Roma coach

ROME (AP) — An Italian prosecutor has summoned the coach of AS Roma, Zdenek Zeman, to hear his allegations that a number of top league Italian soccer players may use performance-enhancing drugs.

Zeman, a Czech, will meet Wednesday with prosecutor Raffaele Guariniello in Turin, a day after questioning in Rome by officials of the Italian Olympic Committee.

Guariniello has been investigating doping in sports for several years, as well as other health-related issues.

"I'm at everyone's disposal for the good of soccer," Zeman was quoted Monday as saying in Gazzetta dello Sport, the Italian sports daily.

In interviews with several newspapers and the newsweekly Espresso over the past days, Zeman said he was amazed by the quick muscular development of some players such as Alessandro Del Piero and Gianluca Vialli.

Zeman never mentioned doping substances openly. He always referred to medicines.

Del Piero, a Juventus star, instructed his agent to sue for libel.

Vialli, a former player of Juventus and currently Chelsea's player-coach in the English Premier League, angrily said Zeman is a "terrorist trying to destabilise the soccer world."

Arab Junior Swimming Championships Jordan wins 1st bronze medal

By Roufan Nahhas
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Jordan's Sadeq Damrah Monday captured the first bronze medal for Jordan after securing third place in the 100m breaststroke clocking 1:15.20 on the opening day of the 5th Arab Junior Swimming Championships at Al Hussein Youth City with 12 countries taking part in swimming, water polo and diving competitions.

Only five seconds stood between Damrah and first place Egypt's Ahmed Khoulil who clocked 1:10.70. Morocco's Younes Marabet came second with 1:13.29.

As expected Egypt are here for the gold as they took first places in the boys 50m butterfly with 25.81 seconds by Wael Dwaider while Jordan's Loai Haqi came sixth clocking 28.61. Yasmine Abu Alez in the girls clocked 1:00:66 100m freestyle while Jordan's Hiba Nasser came 12th with 01:10.11.

Jordan's Sandi Zraiq came fourth with 01:12.58. Ahmed Shadli came first in the 50m butterfly with 26.90 while Jordan's Saed Al Nasser came in the 6th place with :0.26.

Algeria took the gold medal in the boys 50m butterfly by Raouf Ben Obaid with 27.94 while Jordan's Sahar Al Rabadi came in the 7th place with a time of 33.44.

Coach Ali Nawwas expressed his satisfaction with

some results but hoped to do better on the second day. Egypt's coach Majdi Mansour noted his happiness with the organisation.

"I am happy with the things the federation prepared and we hope to get more gold medals," Mansour told the Jordan Times.

"Jordan's swimmers need to gain more international experience," he added.

Meanwhile Damrah, winner of the first Jordanian medal said that he was surprised of the win.

"I was totally surprised of the result because I was concentrating on swimming and did not look around to check the clock," Damrah told the Jordan Times.

"It is not easy to swim against Egypt but when there is a will there is a way," he added.

The August 10-16 event groups swimmers from Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Egypt, Algeria, Oman, Iraq, Syria, Qatar, Tunisia, Palestine, Morocco in addition to Jordan.

Held under the Patronage of Her Royal Highness Princess Rania, the event is the first of many in preparation for the upcoming Pan-Arab Games which will be held in Amman 1999.

Coach Nawwas added that still we need more time to improve our swimming technique so we can compete on the Arab level.

"Time also is moving for others and that is why we have to move faster so we at least level with the Arabs," he said.

Baggio looks forward to Euro 2000

APPIANO GENTILE, Italy (AFP) — Roberto Baggio warned his rivals on Monday that he is hungry for success with both Inter Milan and the national side this season.

Inter will be pitching for the Serie A title and the European Champions League, but the 31-year-old also wants to keep his place in the national squad for the forthcoming Euro 2000 qualifiers.

He shied away from choosing one of the three objectives over the others saying: "I don't want to choose or to put them in any order."

"The important thing is to aim for all three and perhaps, with the help of the squad, it will go well on all three fronts."

After a year with Bologna, Baggio will be playing alongside Ronaldo in a team which is packed with World Cup performers and talented youngsters.

"There's no doubt about, this is a great group of players," Baggio said at Inter's training ground here. "They're very good technically and they're modest with it, and I think that's fundamental for any team."

Baggio's first official outing for Inter will be in Wednesday's Champions League preliminary round tie against Skonto Riga of Latvia.

"The Champions League is a very important objective for us, and let's hope we make a good start," he said. "We've seen some tapes (of Skonto Riga) but we'll study them more closely today and tomorrow."

Meanwhile, he is anxious to avoid complacency for the first leg at Pisa.

"You have to be careful against any club in the European Cup," he warned. "There are no easy games, and if you underestimate a side that you don't know well you could end up with a very nasty surprise. "We cannot afford to make a single mistake."

Though a goal would be an ideal way to start his new life with Inter, Baggio tried to play down his own contribution.

"I've only played 60 minutes of football so far, so I think the most important thing is that we get a good result as a team," he said. "My own personal performance is something

GOREN BRIDGE

WITH OMAR SHARIF
& TAMARA HIRSCH

ANSWERS TO WEEKLY BRIDGE QUIZ

- Q. 1 - Both vulnerable, as South you hold:
- ♠ 8 3 ♣ 8 3 ♦ 5 ♠ K Q J 5 2
- Partner opens the bidding with one spade. What do you respond?
- A - With only nine points in high cards, your hand does not measure up to a two-over-one response of two clubs. That leaves you with only one option — a raise to two spades. Whether you play four- or five-card majors has no bearing on the response.
- Q. 2 - As South, vulnerable, you hold:
- ♠ 2 ♣ 10 8 6 ♦ A K 10 9 4 3 ♠ Q 9 6
- Your right-hand opponent opens the bidding with one spade. What action do you take?
- A - You don't have much in the way of high cards, but you do have a good six-card minor and a singleton spade. If you don't get into the auction now, it will be too dangerous to do so later. Bid two diamonds.
- Q. 3 - Neither vulnerable, as South you hold:
- ♠ 10 9 8 5 4 ♣ A J 8 3 ♦ A J 9 7 ♠ Void
- Your right-hand opponent opens one club. What action do you take?
- A - You have a hand with support for the three unbid suits and defensive values into the bargain. Despite the low high-card count, this is a classic takeout double, and nothing else should be considered.
- Q. 4 - Both vulnerable, as South you hold:
- ♠ Q 8 3 ♣ 5 3 ♦ 9 8 3 2 ♠ K 5 2
- The bidding has proceeded: NORTH EAST SOUTH WEST
1♣ Pass 1♦ Pass
2♦ Pass 2♠ Pass
What action do you take?
- A - You barely had enough to scrape up a response, and now that you have surely located at least a 4-4 fit, there is no reason to think of any other spot. Pass.
- Q. 5 - Both vulnerable, as South you hold:
- ♠ A Q ♣ A K J 8 8 4 3 ♦ 7 3
- Your right-hand opponent opens the bidding with one club. What do you bid now?
- A - The textbook way to handle this monster is to double, then jump in diamonds at your next turn. However, should you wish to gamble that the opponents cannot run at least five clubs on the go and bid three no trump, we admire your courage.
- Q. 6 - As South, vulnerable, you hold:
- ♠ 8 5 2 ♣ 8 ♦ A K Q 7 8 4 3 ♠ A 8
- The bidding has proceeded: WEST NORTH EAST SOUTH
Pass 1♣ Pass ?
What do you respond?
- A - Even though you have only 13 high-card points and a singleton in partner's suit, your self-sustaining diamond suit and side ace are enough to justify a jump shift. Bid three diamonds. Unless partner rebids three no trump, your intent should be to rebid four diamonds next to describe a powerful one-suiter.

Davenport downs injured Pierce in San Diego final

SAN DIEGO (AFP) — Lindsay Davenport won her second title in two weeks Sunday, overwhelming an ailing Mary Pierce 6-3, 6-1 to claim the WTA Tour event here.

Second-seeded Davenport collected \$79,000, and Pierce received \$36,000 for her runner-up finish.

Pierce, who had upset top seed Martina Hingis in the semifinals, suffered a pulled muscle in her right thigh as she practiced for the final, and twice received treatment in the 52 minute match.

She could make only a token effort against her American opponent and Davenport was never stretched. She broke twice in each set and conceded only six points on serve.

"In the first couple of games I didn't think anything was wrong because she was serving well," said Davenport. "But as the match went on you could definitely tell that the groin was bothering her and she wasn't really running for balls. It's a little bitter-sweet to win a title like that."

Often, an injury to a player can distract their opponent and put more pressure on them, and that is something Davenport had to tackle.

"It's tough," said Davenport. "I'm thinking I've got to win this, and then I was thinking is she going to retire. It was so difficult to play. It was more of a mental match. You're trying to play and not worry about anything. I was really happy



Lindsay Davenport

when I broke her again for 4-1 (in the second set) because I didn't want to give her chance to get back into the match."

"I was quite upset about it after the match," said Pierce. "In the match I tried to do what I could with it. I'm frustrated because I've been hav-

ing a great week and getting better and better every day. But it's part of sports, part of tennis, and it's out of your control."

Pierce said she never considered withdrawing, even though the injury affected every aspect of her game.

"It affected everything," she said. "Serves, moving. To play against someone like Lindsay you have to be at the top of your game and feel that you can complete. But I have to give Lindsay credit because it's not easy to play against someone that you know is injured."

Davenport's victory takes her another step closer to topping Martina Hingis from the number one ranking. Since boasting at the French Open that she had a comfortable lead over everyone else, Hingis now has both Davenport and Novotna breathing down her neck.

"To take over number one I'm going to have to step up my performances in Grand Slams," said Davenport.

"It's not really in my mind. But I think it's funny, because about six months ago I was about 3000 points behind and it's 500 or 600 now."

"It's sort of a dream, but if I'm going to do it I'm probably going to have to win the U.S. Open. I hadn't really thought about it because she's been so far ahead of everybody. There's still a lot of points between us, but it's pretty obtainable, I guess."

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Iraq: Sanctions have killed 1.4m

BAGHDAD (R) — Nearly 1.4 million Iraqis have died as a result of eight-year-old United Nations trade sanctions because of shortages of food and medicine, Health Minister Umid Midhat Mubarak was quoted as saying on Monday.

Mubarak told the ruling Baath Party newspaper Al Thawra that more than one million Iraqi children had died as a result of the punitive sanctions imposed for Iraq's 1990 invasion of Kuwait.

He said an average of 6,452 children under the age of five were now dying each month, compared to 539 a month before the Gulf crisis.

The death rate was 92 per 1,000 births in 1998 compared to 24 in 1989, he said.

According to ministry statistics, carried by the official Iraqi News Agency, deaths among people over five had risen from 1,600 to 7,600 a month over the same period.

The minister said hospitals lacked medical supplies such as anaesthetics, pain killers and spare parts for medical equipment.

He said that before the sanctions Iraq used to import medicines worth \$500 million a year and had stocks worth \$1.25 billion.

Now most of Baghdad's medical imports come from Jordan and have not exceeded \$35 million a year since the beginning of the embargo, he added.

U.N. sanctions do not prohibit medical imports but, with oil exports curtailed,

the government lacks money to pay for them.

The U.N. has since December 1996 allowed Iraq limited oil sales over six months on a renewable basis to buy food, medicines and other relief goods.

Mubarak said only a minimal amount of the supplies allocated for the third phase of the deal, which ended four months ago, had actually reached the country. None of \$280 million worth of medical supplies assigned in the fourth phase

had arrived in Iraq, he said.

He blamed delays in the arrival of medicines on U.S. and British representatives on the U.N. sanctions committee on Iraq.

"All the medicines that we contracted with companies are life-saving, but still they are delayed because of strange excuses by the American and British representatives," he said.

Hospitals in Iraq are currently operating at 30 per cent of normal capacity because of the shortage of

medical supplies.

Many are forced to turn away all but emergency cases, Mubarak said.

"Iraqi health establishments need no less than \$2 billion to rehabilitate them," the minister said.

Spare parts are also lacking for electricity, water and sewerage systems and the health of the population has deteriorated because of shortages in chlorine for water purification and the power to operate these systems.

Iraqi minister slams U.S., U.K. for impeding medical contracts

BAGHDAD (AFP) — Iraq's Health Minister Umid Midhat Mubarak slammed U.S. and British representatives on the U.N. Sanctions Committee on Monday for using "stupid pretexts" to block medical supply contracts.

"The American and British representatives always block the contracts presented to the committee by evoking stupid and insignificant pretexts," the minister said in an interview with the ruling Baath Party newspaper Al Thawra.

The Sanctions Committee examines all contracts for supplies bought under the oil-for-food programme which allows Iraq to sell a limited amount of oil in return for basic foodstuffs and medical supplies.

Mubarak said about \$620 million of the programme's revenue had been spent on medicine supplies since it was launched at the end of 1996.

"This amount is largely insufficient and the Sanctions Committee is only complicating the situation further," he said.

"The hindrances caused by the American and British representatives have meant that only 0.5 per cent of the medicines ordered

during the third phase of the oil-for-food programme (January-June 1998) have been delivered to Iraq."

Mubarak accused the U.S. and British representatives of cancelling, without explanation, 84 contracts presented by his ministry.

"The bank which controls Iraq's oil revenue from this programme is also playing an important role in hindering the completion of contracts," he said, referring to France's Banque Nationale de Paris.

On Sunday, the ministry claimed that about 33,000 Iraqi children under five years old had died during the first half of this year because of the embargo. Most died of diseases that could have been cured if adequate medical supplies were available, the minister said.

Health ministry statistics show that "more than one million Iraqis" of all ages have died since the start of sanctions in August 1990.

The oil embargo can only be lifted once the U.N. Special Commission (UNSCOM) charged with dismantling Iraq has certified that it no longer has weapons of mass destruction or long-range missiles.

U.S. firms to participate in Tehran fair

TEHRAN (AFP) — Three major American corporations are to take part in an international trade fair in the Iranian capital in October despite the standing U.S. economic embargo against Tehran, an official said Monday.

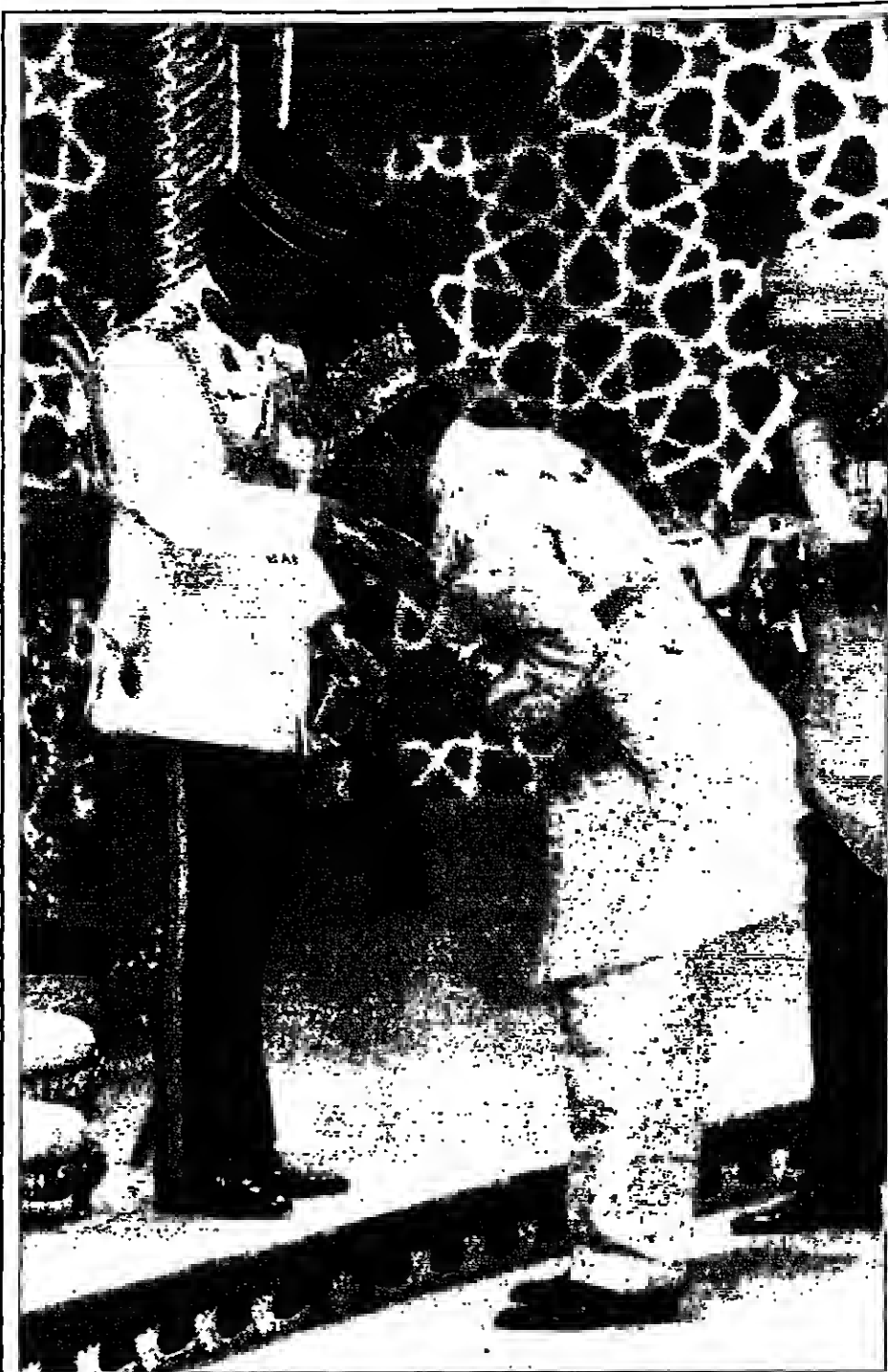
Hussein Estahbadi, an official with Iran's Export Promotion Centre, said "three multi-national American companies" will attend the October 1-9 exhibition, but did not give their names.

American firms have stayed away from Tehran fairs since Washington in June 1995 banned U.S. companies from trading with Iran to punish what it called Iran's support for international terrorism and efforts to procure weapons of mass destruction.

But U.S.-Iranian relations have thawed in recent months after President Mohammad Khatami called in January for greater contact between the two countries.

A total of 207 foreign companies from 68 countries are expected to take part in the 24th Tehran International Fair.

Several countries will participate for the first time, including Saudi Arabia, whose relations with Iran have considerably improved in the past year.



KISSING HIS FATHER'S HAND: Brunei's new crown prince kisses the hand of his father, Sultan Hassanal Bolkiah, after he was passed on the mantle of ruling Brunei after his father, Monday. He was given a traditional Malay knife to proclaim him the heir to Brunei's throne in Bandar Seri Begawan in Darussalam. Thousands of people lined the streets to witness the procession after the ceremony (AP photo)

Netanyahu, Barak hold secret talks on possible early elections

TEL AVIV (AFP) — Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has held a series of secret meetings with Israel's main opposition leader, Ehud Barak, to discuss a possible national unity government or early elections, officials said Monday.

In an unsuccessful bid to keep the encounters secret, the two met in Tel Aviv at the headquarters of Israel's foreign intelligence agency, Mossad, the Maariv newspaper reported.

The meetings took place just prior to a trip to the United States last week by Labour Party leader Barak, it said in revealing the talks.

Uzi Barant, a senior Labour Party official, said the discussions centred on possible political consequences of a decision by Netanyahu to carry out withdrawals from more of the occupied West Bank as required of Israel under the Oslo peace accords.

Ultra-nationalist parties in Netanyahu's right-wing coalition had said they will topple the government if it transfers more West Bank land to Yasser Arafat's Palestinian National Authority (PNA).

More moderate members of government have said they will withdraw if Netanyahu does not carry out the pullbacks.

"They discussed various options, including a national unity government and early elections, but nothing was decided," Barant said on Israel Radio.

Barant cautioned, however, that the meetings, news of which was leaked to Maariv by Netanyahu's office according to Labour officials, may only have been a ploy by the prime minister to frighten his right-wing critics into silence.

Netanyahu's office would only say that the talks with Barak involved "exchanging views" on the current political situation.

Maariv reported that Netanyahu reaffirmed to Barak that he had taken a "strategic decision" to press ahead with a further withdrawal from the West Bank that he has been resisting for months in U.S.-mediated negotiations with the Palestinians.

Netanyahu was quoted as suggesting that his Likud Party and Labour join in a national unity government

ment, but growing numbers of his followers are openly backing such moves.

Late last month the parliament approved a bill in its first reading to dissolve the legislature and hold early elections, now scheduled until 2000.

In the peace talks, Netanyahu has so far rejected a U.S.-drafted compromise under which Israel would yield a further 13 per cent of the West Bank in tandem with tougher Palestinian action against Islamists.

The two sides would then launch negotiations on a permanent peace settlement which should be reached by May next year under the timetable set out in the 1993 Oslo accords.

Under strong pressure from the far-right and Jewish settlers who maintain more than 100 enclaves in the West Bank, Netanyahu has refused to offer more than 10 per cent of the territory to the Palestinians at this stage.

He has recently offered to declare another three per cent "nature reserves" where the PNA would have only very limited powers.

Negotiations between the two sides over the exact terms of control over the "nature reserves" has dragged on for the past month with no signs of a quick resolution although the Israeli press on Monday carried claims by unnamed Israeli officials that a deal was near.

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Candice Bergen may become a 'real-life' journalist

NEW YORK (AP) — After playing one on television, actress Candice Bergen may land a job as a real-life journalist on "60 Minutes."

Bergen's experience as a reporter for the fictional "FYT" on the CBS network's "Murphy Brown" may lead to a stint on CBS' actual award-winning show, according to Don Hewitt, executive producer of "60 Minutes."

Rolling Stones make it at last to Moscow

MOSCOW (AFP) — Britain's veteran megagroup the Rolling Stones fulfilled a dream dating back to the swinging sixties Sunday when they arrived at last for their first-ever concert in Moscow. The Stones' Russian ambitions were persistently thwarted over decades by Soviet cultural bureaucracy unwilling to let them loose on the Moscow fans.

Activists accused of provoking potential wildlife disaster

LONDON (AFP) — Animal rights activists who freed 6,000 mink from a factory farm in southern England were accused Sunday of provoking a potential wildlife disaster in the area. The Animal Liberation Front claimed responsibility for smashing cages and cutting wires at a fur farm near Ringwood, southern England, Saturday and allowing the ferocious predators to escape into the New Forest.

Homosexuals demand consent at 16

LONDON (AFP) — London's famous Big Ben clock tower was lit up with a huge pink 16, late Sunday in a stunt by campaigners wanting the age of consent for homosexuals lowered to 16. They projected the image onto the famous Houses of Parliament landmark.

Jay Leno takes turn as a pro wrestler

STURGIS (AP) — Talk show host Jay Leno took a turn as a pro wrestler in an outdoor tag-team match staged at the Sturgis Motorcycle Classic, where thousands of bikers who Harley-revered their engines to rally the big-chinned crowd. In a "spon" where competitors wear Day-Glo spandex, the "Tonight Show" host opted for a huggy T-shirt and sweat pants.

Hillary to champion women's rights in Bosnia

SARAJEVO (AP) — First lady Hillary Clinton teamed up with Glenn Close and Marisa Tomei to champion women's rights in post-war Bosnia. Close and Tomei travelled to Sarajevo to join Bosnian actors in a Saturday production of "Necessary Targets," a play by Eve Ensler about women traumatised by war in the former Yugoslavian province.

Italian sandwich breaks record

BEDONIA (AFP) — Ditching the pizza as the source of national gastronomic pride, bakers in the Italian town of Bedonia have kneaded out a place in the Guinness Book of Records with the world's largest sandwich.

Local authorities said some 200 people worked through Saturday night to create the 332.66-metre sandwich, which was filled with cold meats, cheese and a chocolate hazelnut paste.

Develops airport facilities near border

BAGHDAD (R) — Iraq has redeveloped a former complex on the border with Iran, the Iraqi government said Tuesday.

The complex is a sign of the thaw in relations between the two countries, which was opened by the President Taha Ramadan on Monday, according to the Iraqi authorities.

The Iraqi authorities said some 3,000 Iranian troops were to the holy city of Mecca, the weekly

King, Queen visit emb in Washington

WASHINGTON (Petra) — Their Majesty King Hussein and Queen Noor visited the U.S. Secretary of State Thomas H. Clinton on Monday to discuss the peace process and other regional issues. The King, who was received by Clinton's envoy to Washington, Jordan's ambassador, reassured

Yemenis at border

SAUDI ARABIA (AFP) — Saudi Arabia and Yemen held talks Sunday evening in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, to discuss the disputed border between the two countries. The meeting was part of a series of talks since the July 1997 agreement to force the dispute. The Saudi-Yemeni border has been a source of tension since 1995, when Saudi Arabia drew a new border line. The new line was set in 1995, but it was not until 1997 that it was agreed to be implemented. The new line was set in 1995, but it was not until 1997 that it was agreed to be implemented. The new line was set in 1995, but it was not until 1997 that it was agreed to be implemented.

to send to Baghdad

TEHRAN (AFP) — Iran decided to send a delegation to Baghdad to discuss the situation in Iraq. The delegation will be led by a senior Iranian official. The delegation will be led by a senior Iranian official. The delegation will be led by a senior Iranian official.

League support for forum

TEHRAN (AFP) — The Arab League has expressed support for a forum to be held in Baghdad to discuss the situation in Iraq. The forum will be held in Baghdad to discuss the situation in Iraq. The forum will be held in Baghdad to discuss the situation in Iraq.

Israeli PM's visit to Jerusalem

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106,000 illegal immigrants expelled from Saudi Arabia

RIYADH (AFP) — Saudi Arabia expelled 106,000 illegal workers from the kingdom in the last three months, newspapers said Monday.

The expulsions follow a Saudiisation campaign launched in October aimed at replacing several thousand expatriate workers with Saudi nationals.

About 750,000 illegal workers have already been expelled under the programme, the latest government statistics show.

Just under 400 Saudi nationals were jailed in the last three months for breaking immigration laws, the newspapers said. A further 1,400 were fined for the same offence.

Riyadh hopes to create 650,000 jobs for Saudi nationals, under a five-year budget begun in 1995. Most of these jobs will come from replacing expatriate workers with locals.

Official estimates put the number of expatriate workers in the kingdom, who are most-

ly Asian nationals, at about a third of the 18 million-strong population.

The Saudi government in July stopped renewing work contracts for non-Saudi nationals employed in government offices, except for a few technical posts.

Last year, the government also closed off seven categories of state-funded work, mainly in the manual labour sector, for foreign workers.

American firms have stayed away from Tehran fairs since Washington in June 1995 banned U.S. companies from trading with Iran to punish what it called Iran's support for international terrorism and efforts to procure weapons of mass destruction.

But U.S.-Iranian relations have thawed in recent months after President Mohammad Khatami called in January for greater contact between the two countries.

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Swimsuit dip still seen as daring in Gaza

GAZA CITY (AP) — While the Palestinian lands suffer through a sweltering heat wave, some women in the socially conservative Gaza Strip are taking a radical step to keep cool.

They're swimming. In swimsuits.

But only at a pair of private clubs, with men firmly banished from the premises. Elsewhere along Gaza's Mediterranean coastline, women were continuing their usual practice of swimming only in long, enveloping robes.

In Gaza, record temperatures of more than 36 degrees Celsius combined with 85 per cent humidity are making life miserable in crowded towns and refugee camps. Health officials said 200 people have been treated at hospitals for heat-related ailments.

"Nobody can walk in the street during the day," said Sami Khalefa, part of a long line of customers waiting to buy ice cream and soft drinks. "This heat wave is a punishment from God." The water is only way you can avoid the heat," said Wael Bdeir, a 21-year-old man from a seaside refugee camp, as he paddled in the Mediterranean. "I'm going to spend all day in the sea." The main Gaza City beach was packed with hundreds of families, including women in flowing robes.

At the private Seagull tourist resort in Gaza, director Hiba Hikmat said women in bathing suits were being allowed to swim daily.

Before the heat wave, the resort was open to swimsuit-wearing women only two days a week, but Hikmat said because there was only one other private resort in Gaza

where they can swim without robes, it was decided to effectively turn the resort over to them.

Temperatures in Israel and the Palestinian lands have been higher than normal for more than three weeks.

In southern Israel, a record 47 Celsius for the day was recorded Sunday. In occupied Jerusalem, the temperature hovered at 41 Celsius.

In the West Bank town of Jericho, where temperatures soared past 41 Celsius, a Palestinian prisoner died in jail from overheating, according to officials Sunday (see story on page 2).

At a farm in northern Israel, 60 chickens perished in the scorching heat. Health ministry officials urged people to drink plenty of water and stay in air-conditioned rooms if possible.

"We offer and the clients choose," said Ayman Al Taranissi, conference manager at Ennaco, one of Egypt's top tour operators.

Taranissi said his firm has tailor-made events for half-a-dozen clients this year, including the international auditors Coopers and Lybrand and the financial firm Price Waterhouse.

"It is a growing trend to party at the monuments. There is history involved and people like to link the name of their company to a particular monument," he said.

Taranissi said his company planned on increasing its "party" business. "Any historical location is a target although clients always prefer the monuments that are well-known such as the Giza Pyramids," he said.

When Egypt's National Bank celebrated its 100th birthday in May, it opted for the Cairo Citadel, a fortress built by the Arab conqueror Salahuddin in the 12th century which houses 100 monuments, including mosques.

The recently-privatised Al Ahram Beverage Company which brews Egypt's only beer, Stella, held a gala celebration at

the foot of the pyramids in March for its 100th birthday.

And the South Korean car makers Daewoo staged a spectacular show in July at the foot of the sphinx and the pyramids to mark the opening of a car assembly plant in Egypt, during which they introduced their latest vehicles.

For Zahi Hawas, the passionate keeper of the Giza Pyramids, the private use of monuments is fine as long as it is done with taste.

"We are willing to do what it takes to encourage tourism as long as it does not harm the monuments and as long as we

don't turn the place into a zoo," Hawas told AFP.

The pyramids have always been used as a backdrop in parties, concerts and operas," he said, recalling that Egypt's late diva Umm Kalthum and the blue-eyed boy himself, Frank Sinatra, performed there.

The SCA has a price list for nine locations which can be rented out for parties. But a strict set of rules applies and the monuments can be enjoyed only after a fair amount of paperwork is completed.

The citadel can be had for \$2,941 while the area in front of the Hall of Temple of

Dendarah, one of Egypt's best preserved monuments, goes for a mere \$1,470.

Partisans of the Pyramids can either party at the sound and light area facing the three pyramids and the sphinx at an undisclosed fee, or spend \$588 to dance the night away four kilometres south of the plateau at a desert site called Saham City which commands the pyramids.

Among the rules listed by the SCA is one stressing that only "reception" parties can be held with attendance limited to 200 people and that the event must be "dignified."

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Among the rules listed by the SCA is one stressing that only "reception" parties can be held with attendance limited to 200 people and that the event must be "dignified."

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